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HAMLET

PRINCE OF DENMARK

By
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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THE HISTORY OF DENMARK

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

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NOTE

The excisions in the text of this edition of Hamlet have been made after careful reference to many authorities. They closely follow the version prepared by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson for his revival at the Lyceum Theatre, and it is by his advice that Scenes III and IV of Act IV (very frequently omitted) have been here retained, though presented as Scenes I and II of that Act.

It will be noticed that Act IV is arranged in three Scenes instead of seven—and that the text is, for the sake of clarity, printed for the arranged sequence. The only other compression is the early portion of Scene II, Act V; otherwise the full text is given, clearly bracketed for the suggested abridgments.

In the sequence of the Scenes, and by the use of the scenery as suggested, it will be found possible to avoid any waits other than those between the Acts.

The thanks of the Publishers are due to Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson for his courtesy in placing his version in the Editor's hands.

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English 167335 Read Direct.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.
HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.
POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.
[VOLTIMAND.]
[CORNELIUS.]
ROSENCRANTZ,
GUILDENSTERN,
OSRIC,
[A GENTLEMAN.] } courtiers.
A PRIEST.
MARCELLUS, } officers.
BERNARDO, }
FRANCISCO, a soldier.
REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.
GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER.
1ST PLAYER.
2ND PLAYER.
1ST GRAVEDIGGER.
2ND GRAVEDIGGER.
A MESSENGER.
FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.
A CAPTAIN. ENGLISH AMBASSADORS.
GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.
PLAYER QUEEN.
LORDS, LADIES, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, PAGES, MESSENGERS, AND OTHER ATTENDANTS.

Scene.—Denmark.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

ACT I

EL SINORE

SCENE

- I. A Platform before the Castle.
- II. A Room of State in the Castle.
- III. The Platform.
- IV. A more remote part.

ACT II

SCENE

- I. A Room of State in the Castle.

ACT III

SCENE

- I. A Room of State in the Castle.
- II. Another Room in the same.

ACT IV

SCENE

- I. A Room in the Castle.
- II. A Plain in Denmark.
- III. The Orchard.

ACT V

SCENE

- I. A Churchyard.
- II. A Room in the Castle.
- III. A Room of State in the Castle.

NOTE

The scenery as suggested should make it possible to carry the action continuously throughout each Act.

Fig. 1. Stands, practically, through the entire play. A reference to this and to—

Fig. 2, will show how simply the change is effected; the arches being “fled” and lowered to position and the side Traverses I, as indicated in plan, drawn, together with Traverse B; this with the removal of the Stonepiece R. completes the change, unless use be made of Fig. 4.

Fig. 3. An inset scene—which can be braced, and flanked by Tabs or Traverse J and backed by Traverse F, which is used in all inset scenes, and should be of a neutral tone upon which different effects of light may be obtained.

Fig. 4. The suggestion here is that four of these buttresses, made in light framing and canvas, should be used to mask columns in Scene I, Act I.

Fig. 5. A change of flat only—which may be “fled” or braced in two pieces.

Fig. 6. Inset. Two pieces between which the soldiers of Fortinbras pass; the arrangement enabling a small number of men to appear greater, i.e. that they may pass and re-pass.

Fig. 7. The same set as Scene I, Act I. The stone wall and gateway on rostrum removed—which removal may take place after Act I. The two tree pieces set as indicated. The change in lighting from the dark of Act I will cause this scene to appear totally different. Blue or Tree borders.

Fig. 8. Inset. Braced or “fled.”

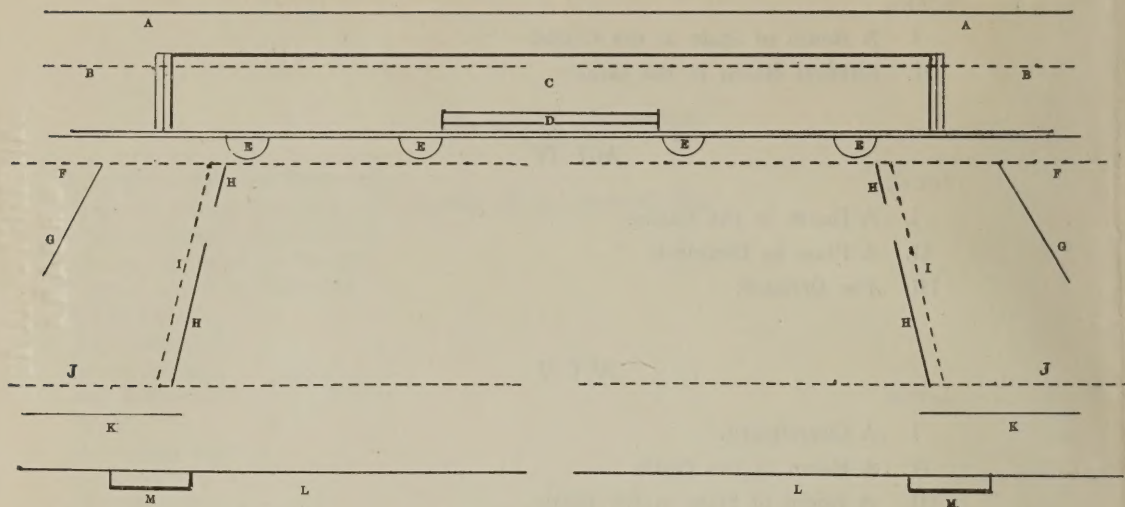
The dotted lines as in Figs. 1 and 2 indicate the positions of Traverses.

In the stone wall piece with gateway, which is set on rostrum for Act I, Scenes I and III, those portions between the columns (E on plan) should be painted gauze transparencies—behind which the Ghost appears—as see marginal notes.

In Scene I, Act III, curtains must be used for the “play.” They should run across and behind the four columns and be suspended from a rod at the height of the capitals.

It must be noted that space be given between stone side walls (H.H.) and columns to allow Traverse F to run.

PLAN OF STAGE



EXPLANATION OF PLAN

- AA. Castle Cloth.
 BB. Tapestry, Traverse.
 C. Rostrum.
 D. Steps.
 F. Four columns—in profile or half section.
 FF. Neutral-coloured Traverse used for all inset scenes, and as a backing—see Fig. 1, Fig. 7.
 GG. Backings—if necessary.
 HH. Stone walls of room with arch entrance, R.U.E.—and L.U.E.
 II. Up and down stage Traverse for closing in on top of side walls for all interiors.
 JJ. Deep Crimson Traverse.
 KK. False Proscenium.
 LL. Tableau Curtain or Act Drop.
 MM. Proscenium.

PROPERTY PLOT

ACT I

Scene I.

Halberds for Francisco and Bernardo.
 Baton for Ghost.
 Box seat in form of large stone, to be set in front of stone piece R.C.

Scene II.

Trumpets.
 Sceptre for king.
 Halberds for soldiers.
 Cushions for Queen's couch.
 White wand of office for Polonius.

Scene III.

Cloak and sword for Hamlet.
 Tablets for Hamlet.

ACT II

Scene I.

Money in purse, notes and letter for Polonius.
 Book for Hamlet.

ACT III

Scene I.

Cushions for the Queen's and Ophelia's chairs, and footstool.
 Book for Polonius.
 Jewels for Ophelia.
 Small phial for Lucianus.
 Recorders for Players.

Scene II.

Branched candle sconces for alcove and in front of picture R.

ACT IV

Scene I. Nil.

Scene II.

Halberds for soldiers.

Scene III.

Stone as seat for base of tree R. Same as used in

Scene I, Act I.

Flowers for Ophelia (if used).

Letter for Messenger.

Bier.

ACT V

Scene I.

Earth to cover mound by grave.

Two picks, two shades for Gravediggers.

Mound, set below open trap c.

Two skulls.

Flowers for Queen.

Scene II. Nil.

Scene III.

Three or four foils for each of the two Attendants.

Goblets, and vessels for wine.

Shield, halberds or spears.

FURNITURE PLOT

ACT I

Scene I. Nil.

Scene II.

Throne.

Couch for Queen set to L. of and below throne.

Chair for Hamlet.

Scene III. Nil.

Scene IV. Nil.

ACT II

Scene I.

Throne.

Raised chair for Queen. (In place of couch.)

ACT III

Scene I.

Throne and Queen's chair, set R.C.

Curtains across all arches for the Play scene—
opening middle of c. arch.

Chair for Ophelia, and stool.

Other chairs and benches for Ladies, Courtiers,
etc., set L.Couch for Player King, to be set when Curtains are
drawn preceding the Play.

Scene II.

Table, set L.C., chair at L. end.

Prie Dieu for alcove. Also before picture R.

Other chairs to furnish.

ACT IV

Scene I. Nil.

Scene II. Nil.

Scene III. Nil.

ACT V

Scene I. Nil.

Scene II. Nil.

Scene III.

Double Throne set R. and raised on dais, with one
or two shallow steps.

Table L.

LIGHTING PLOT

ACT I

Scene I.

Blues and whites in floats and battens, low. Pale steel blue behind c. arch on rostrum to silhouette figure of Francisco at rise of Curtain. This lamp to fade out before entrance of Ghost. Blue or green lamps R. and L. entrances in walls to pick up Ghost—spot or half. Lamp on rostrum L. to pick up Ghost for first exit as lamp at R. shuts off.

At Ghost's second entrance from R. lamp at L. entrance picks up and keeps on until Ghost exits L.

Lamp behind transparency (which must be boxed) comes on as soon as Ghost can get to position on rostrum. Shuts off immediately and lamp at transparency L. comes on and also shuts off immediately.

Black out end of scene.

Float and front batten full up on Traverse J.

LIGHTING PLOT (*continued*)

Scene II.

All full up. Ambers, pinks, whites.
Black out end of scene.
No light on Traverse.

Scene III.

Same as Scene I.
Ghost picked up at R. entrance from L. entrance.
Blue light at back not used.
Black out end of scene.
No light on Traverse.

Scene IV.

Pale blues very low, floats and first batten.
Pick up Ghost from perch R.
Lamp ready, L. perch, to pick up for exit.
At "Now, Hamlet, hear," lighting grows until end
of scene. Then black out.

ACT II

Scene I.

Ambers and whites full up throughout Act.

ACT III

Scene I.

Ambers to open, soft half light. Check during
action.
Reds and Ambers up at Soldiers' entrance with
torches. All lights down a little as torches are
taken off.
All lights taken down towards end of Act.

Scene II.

Half-ambers.
This scene should be dimly lit.
Lamp at R. to pick up Ghost at L.

ACT IV

Scene I.

Full. Black out at end.

Scene II.

Floats and front battens, blues and whites, down.
Pale yellow on Traverse F.
Forms of Soldiers marching only faintly lit.

Scene III.

Full up ambers, whites and pinks.
Commence to check at "It warms the very sickness
in my heart." Carry check very slowly to
ambers and pinks until end of Act.

ACT V

Scene I.

Soft, half, ambers.

Scene II.

Full up—ambers, pinks, whites.

Scene III.

Commence well up. Ambers, whites and pinks.
Begin to check at "Here's to thy health," and con-
tinue and get low by "Flights of Angels sing
thee, etc."
All up at Fortinbras' entrance.
Most light at back from torches.

Note.—The lighting of separate figures must be
left to the skill of the producer.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

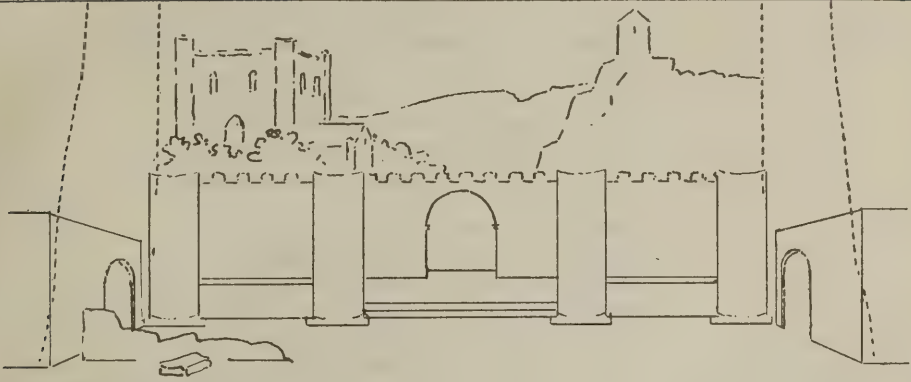


Fig. 1.

ACT THE FIRST

SCENE I

Elsinore. A platform before the castle.¹

FRANCISCO at his post.² Enter to him BERNARDO.³

BERNARDO. Who 's there ?⁴

FRANCISCO. Nay, answer me : stand, and unfold yourself.⁵

BERNARDO. Long live the king!

FRANCISCO. Bernardo ?⁶

BERNARDO. He.

FRANCISCO. You come most carefully upon your hour.

BERNARDO. 'Tis now struck twelve ; get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRANCISCO.⁷ For this relief much thanks : 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO. Have you had quiet guard ?⁸

FRANCISCO. Not a mouse stirring.⁹

BERNARDO. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

FRANCISCO. I think I hear them. Stand, ho!¹⁰ Who 's there ?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.¹¹

HORATIO. Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS. And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO. Give you good night.¹²

[1] The front of the stage, below the rostrum, is in semi-darkness. A faint steel blue light on cloth at back of C. arch. A pause at curtain rise.

[2] FRANCISCO is resting on his halberd motionless, his figure silhouetted against the faint light behind him. He stands in the archway C.

[3] BERNARDO enters from arch in the wall L.

[4] An indication of apprehension in the manner of BERNARDO in respect of the apparition of the KING must be registered from the outset. BERNARDO'S "Who's there?" should not be given as an ordinary challenge, but as though the man had superstitious dread.

[5] A little down steps. Halberd lowered.

[6] Lifting halberd. BERNARDO L.C.

[7] Crossing in front of BERNARDO towards arch L.

[8] At steps C.

[9] At arch L. Turning to BERNARDO.

[10] A few paces back—arm presented.

[11] From arch L. MARCELLUS a little before HORATIO and on his R. hand.

[12] Passes in front of HORATIO and MARCELLUS to arch L.

MARCELLUS. O, farewell, honest soldier :
Who hath relieved you ?

FRANCISCO. Bernardo has my place.

Give you good night.

MARCELLUS. Holla! Bernardo!

BERNARDO. Say,

What, is Horatio there ?

HORATIO. A piece of him.¹

BERNARDO. Welcome, Horatio : welcome, good Marcellus.²

MARCELLUS. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night ?

BERNARDO. I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us :

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night ;

That if again this apparition come,

He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.³

BERNARDO.

Sit down awhile ;

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we have two nights seen.

HORATIO.

Well, sit we down,⁴

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.⁵

BERNARDO.⁶ Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole,⁷

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one,—

*Enter GHOST.*⁸

MARCELLUS.⁹ Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes again !¹⁰

¹¹ BERNARDO. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MARCELLUS. Thou art a scholar ; speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO. Looks it not like the king ? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO. Most like : it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO. It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS.

Question it, Horatio.

¹² HORATIO. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march ? by heaven I charge thee, speak !

MARCELLUS. It is offended.

BERNARDO.

See, it stalks away !

HORATIO. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

*[Exit GHOST.]*¹³

MARCELLUS. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BERNARDO. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale :¹⁴

Is not this something more than fantasy ?

What think you on 't ?

HORATIO. Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS. Is it not like the king ?

HORATIO. As thou art to thyself :

Such was the very armour he had on

[1] *Advancing to BERNARDO.*

[2] HORATIO R.C., BERNARDO C., MARCELLUS L.C.

[3] *Coming down stage in front of stone-piece R.C.*

[4] *Sits on stonepiece.*

[5] MARCELLUS, *going behind stonepiece, rests upon it.*

[6] *Advancing a pace towards HORATIO.*

[7] *Pointing R. Check tights. Spot time at R. arch to pick up at L. arch.*

[8] *From arch L. GHOST advances two paces.*

[9] *Advancing to BERNARDO laying his hand on his shoulder. HORATIO rises, backing a little R.*

[10] BERNARDO turns and follows the direction of MARCELLUS'S pointing hand.

[11] *All voices lowered.*

[12] *All keep same positions ; no gesture until the exit of GHOST.*

[13] *Arch C. to R. Spot time from behind Traverse F. right, to pick up for exit. Time at R. arch shuts off.*

[14] *Leaving MARCELLUS and facing HORATIO, who works across to L.C. at GHOST'S exit, MARCELLUS R.C., above BERNARDO, who is down stage C.*

When he the ambitious Norway combated ;
 So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
 He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
 'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
 With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO. [In what particular thought to work I know not ;
 But in the gross and scope of my opinion,]
 This bodes some strange eruption to our state.¹

² MARCELLUS. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that
 knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
 So nightly toils the subject of the land,
 [And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
 And foreign mart for implements of war ;
 Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
 Does not divide the Sunday from the week ;
 What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
 Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day :
 Who is 't that can inform me ?]

HORATIO. That can I ;
 [At least, the whisper goes so.] Our last king,
 Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
 Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
 [Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,]
 Dared to the combat ; in which our valiant Hamlet—
 [For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—]
 Did slay this Fortinbras ; who, by a seal'd compact,
 [Well ratified by law and heraldry,]
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
 Which he stood seized of, [to the conqueror :
 Against the which, a moiety competent
 Was gag'd by our king ; which had return'd
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
 Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same covenant,
 And carriage of the article design'd,
 His fell to Hamlet.] Now, young Fortinbras,
 [Of unimprov'd mettle hot and full,]
 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
 Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,
 [For food and diet, to some enterprise
 That hath a stomach in 't ; which is no other—
 As it doth well appear unto our state—
 But] to recover of us, [by strong hand
 And terms compulsory,] those foresaid lands
 So by his father lost : and this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations,
 [The source of this our watch and the chief head
 Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

BERNARDO. I think it be no other but e'en so :
 Well may it sort that this portentous figure
 Comes armèd through our watch ; so like the king
 That was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead

[1] *Crossing* BERNARDO to C.

[2] MARCELLUS *comes a little to the R.*
 MARCELLUS R.C., HORATIO C.,
 BERNARDO L.C.

[1] *From R. arch. Pick up with spot from L. The GHOST moves to R.C. HORATIO, BERNARDO and MARCELLUS retreat to L. GHOST R.C. above stonepiece.*

[2] *HORATIO L.C. up stage. BERNARDO L. MARCELLUS on BERNARDO'S L. hand below him. All facing GHOST.*

[3] *GHOST moves slowly towards C.*

[4] *MARCELLUS advances to HORATIO'S L. hand as he speaks.*

[5] *MARCELLUS makes as though to thrust at the GHOST, it passes him and he falls back down stage. HORATIO also falls back up stage to C., the point of his sword falling to the ground. The GHOST passes to arch L. and exits. Spot lime from R. arch taken off. Open lime, set off L., between castle cloth and Traverse F. comes on, and GHOST appears between columns L.*

[6] *Light behind gauze L. off, and light set R. between Traverse F. and castle cloth comes on. The appearance of the GHOST between columns R. should be immediate.*

[7] *R. lime off.*

NOTE.—To make this last effect a double for the GHOST would be necessary, who could be ready behind gauze so that the reappearance could be worked with rapidity.

[8] *A pause.*

[9] *C. facing HORATIO who comes to R.C. BERNARDO L.C.*

[10] *As HORATIO speaks his speech, lights come up a little at back.*

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets :
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun ; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse :
And even the like precursor of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.—]

*Re-enter GHOST.*¹

But soft, behold! lo, it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me.² Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me :
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me :

[Cock crows.]

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
[Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it :] stay, and speak!³ Stop it, Marcellus.

⁴ MARCELLUS. Shall I strike at it with my partisan ?

HORATIO. Do, if it will not stand.⁵

BERNARDO.

'Tis here!⁶

HORATIO.

'Tis here!⁷

MARCELLUS. 'Tis gone!⁸

We do it wrong, being so majestical,⁹

To offer it the show of violence ;

For it is, as the air, invulnerable,

And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BERNARDO. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HORATIO.¹⁰ And then it started like a guilty thing

Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,

The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,

Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat

Awake the god of day ; and, at his warning,

Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,

The extravagant and erring spirit hies

To his confine ; [and of the truth herein

This present object made probation.

MARCELLUS. It faded on the crowing of the cock.

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes

Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,

The bird of dawning singeth all night long :

And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad ;

The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,

No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,

So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

HORATIO. So have I heard and do in part believe it.]

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,

Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill :

Break we our watch up ;¹ and by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet ; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
[Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

MARCELLUS. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.]

[1] Moves towards arch L., then turns and speaks his final lines to the others, who stand facing him C. Black out.

Traverse J, drawn to meet C. Lights full up in front. A group of LORDS and COURTIERs talking amongst themselves pass from R. to L. and exeunt. A fanfare of trumpets off R. An OFFICER at the head of several SOLDIERS of the royal guard pass across the stage from R. to L., followed by ATTENDANTS and PAGES. Then the KING leading the QUEEN preceded by POLONIUS with his wand of office walking backwards in front of them. Other LORDS and LADIES follow, and LAERTES. There is a pause, and HAMLET in deep thought crosses the stage by himself. Traverse J. opens.

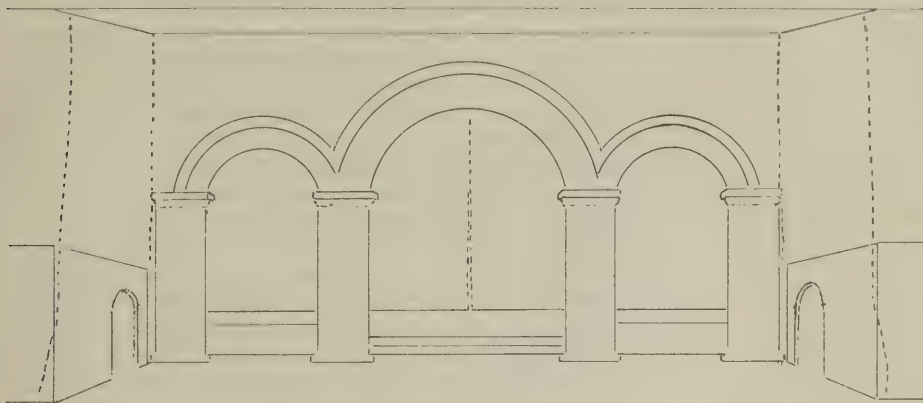


Fig. 2.

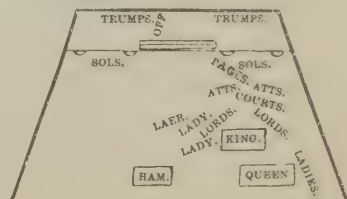
SCENE II

A room of state in the castle.

Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, LORDS, LADIES,
PAGES and ATTENDANTS.²

KING. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

[2] The order of entrances is the same as before Traverse. All entering from the L. across rostrum. The group of LORDS and COURTIERs down C. steps to above KING's throne R. and L. SOLDIERS down steps and divide to R. and L. of C. arch. OFFICER stands on rostrum facing L., R. of C. arch. Trumpets sound L. and TRUMPETERS enter in file and stand on rostrum in line across stage back to Traverse B. LADIES down steps, two standing with group of LORDS R. of throne, the others passing behind it down stage L. to head of QUEEN'S couch. ATTENDANTS to back of LORDS, behind throne. PAGES stand in front of SOLDIERS L. of C. arch. POLONIUS, as before, bowing in front of KING and QUEEN ; he stands aside to L. up stage as they pass, and, when the KING sits, he approaches the throne and stands at the KING'S R. hand. The KING leads the QUEEN to the right of throne ; she comes in front of couch and reclines ; two ladies from the head of the couch assisting her and, after placing cushions, etc., returning L. Whilst this is doing LAERTES joins the group of LORDS and LADIES to the R. of throne. HAMLET follows, timing entrance so that he is standing by chair R.C. at the entrance of the KING and QUEEN, TRUMPETERS sound fanfare, ceasing when the KING is seated.



[Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleaguèd with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting :
Thus much the business is : we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait herein ; in that the levies,
The lists and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject : and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these delated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS and VOLTIMAND. In that and all things will we show
our duty.

KING. We doubt it nothing : heartily farewell.]

And now, Laertes,¹ what's the news with you ?
You told us of some suit ; what is 't, Laertes ?
[You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice : what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes ?]

LAERTES. Dread my lord,²

Your leave and favour to return to France ;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
[And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.]

KING. Have you your father's leave ? What says Polonius ?

POLONIUS.³ He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent :
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.⁴

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

HAMLET (*aside*). A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING. How is it that the clouds still hang on you ?

HAMLET. Not so, my lord ; I am too much i' the sun.

QUEEN.⁵ Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailèd lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust :

[1] LAERTES advances.

[2] Coming between HAMLET and POLONIUS,
the latter giving a little to the R.,
LAERTES kneels at the R. of the throne.

[3] Behind LAERTES.

[4] The KING extends his hand. LAERTES,
rising, bends over it, steps back, turns
on his R. to POLONIUS and, together,
they go a pace or two up stage.

[5] Raising herself from her cushions.

Thou know'st 'tis common ; all that lives must die,
 Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET. Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN. If it be,
 Why seems it so particular with thee ?

HAMLET. Seems, madam! nay, it is ; I know not *seems*.
 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,
 Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
 Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,
 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
 That can denote me truly : these indeed seem,
 For they are actions that a man might play :
 But I have that within which passeth show ;
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
 To give these mourning duties to your father :
 But, you must know, your father lost a father ;
 That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
 In filial obligation for some term
 To do obsequious sorrow : but to perséver
 In obstinate condolement is a course
 Of impious stubbornness : ['tis unmanly grief ;
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
 A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
 An understanding simple and unschool'd :]
 For what we know must be and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we in our peevish opposition
 Take it to heart ? [Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd ; whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
 From the first corse till he that died to-day,
This must be so.] We pray you, throw to earth
 This unprevailing woe, and think of us
 As of a father : for let the world take note,
 You are the most immediate to our throne ;
 And with no less nobility of love
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart toward you. For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire :
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN.¹ Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet :
 I pray thee, stay with us ; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET.² I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING.³ Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply :
 Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come ;
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart : in grace whereof,
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
 And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,

[1] *Rising and approaching back of HAMLET'S chair.*

[2] *Rising, with head bent to the QUEEN.*

[3] *Rising, but remaining on throne.*

[1] *The KING steps from throne, giving his left hand to the QUEEN. The QUEEN turns on her L., placing her right hand in the KING'S. They pass up stage and go out by rostrum, R. Fanfare until they have passed.*

TRUMPETERS follow.

SOLDIER by column of C. arch L. and SOLDIER by column of C. arch R. turn together and ascend steps, marching off stage by rostrum to R. followed by the others in like manner. LORDS, LADIES and COURTIERS in informal grouping follow, some going to the R., some to the L.

ATTENDANTS exit formally to R. and L. by rostrum. LAERTES and POLONIUS during this action go out talking together by the entrance on the R. PAGES go last by rostrum to L. HAMLET, who has remained standing, as the stage empties sinks into his chair.

[2] *Looking towards throne.*

[3] *Starts to his feet.*

[4] *Moves a little to the R.*

[5] *Stops.*

[6] *Coming L.*

[7] *Stops at foot of the QUEEN'S couch.*

[8] *Throwing himself on the couch, his face in the cushions.*

[9] *By rostrum from L., HORATIO descends the steps first, coming down C. to front of HAMLET'S chair R.C. He speaks when down steps. MARCELLUS and BERNARDO come to R. up stage. MARCELLUS enters on BERNARDO'S right hand and gets to his position in advance of BERNARDO so that he stands farthest R.*

[10] *A little pause. HAMLET raises himself from cushions, turns and recognizes HORATIO. Rises as he speaks.*

[11] *Bowing.*

[12] *Advances, meeting HORATIO at foot of couch.*

[13] *Perceiving MARCELLUS he passes in front of HORATIO, extends his hand to him.*

[14] *Bowing over hand, down R.*

[15] *Greets BERNARDO who has come to back of chair, R.C.*

[16] *Returning to HORATIO L., laying his hand on his shoulders.*

[17] *Withdraws hands.*

[18] *Turns to C.*

Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.¹

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*]

HAMLET. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on 't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,²
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!³
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
⁴ Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman—⁵
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears:—why she, even she—
⁶ O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—⁷ married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules: within a month:
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. [O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!]
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
⁸ But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*⁹

HORATIO. Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET.

¹⁰ I am glad to see you well:

Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

HORATIO. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.¹¹

HAMLET.¹² Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?¹³

Marcellus?

MARCELLUS. My good lord—¹⁴

HAMLET. I am very glad to see you.¹⁵ Good even, sir.

¹⁶ But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO. A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET. I would not hear your enemy say so,

Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,

To make it truster of your own report

Against yourself: I know you are no truant.

But what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HORATIO. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;¹⁸
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.¹⁸

HORATIO. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAMLET. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!—methinks I see my father.¹

HORATIO. Where, my lord?

HAMLET. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

HAMLET. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET. Saw? who?

HORATIO. My lord, the king, your father.

HAMLET. The king my father!

HORATIO. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.²

HAMLET. For God's love, let me hear.

HORATIO. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surpris'd eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

HAMLET. But where was this?

MARCELLUS. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAMLET. Did you speak to it?

HORATIO. My lord, I did;

But answer made it none: yet once methought
It lifted up its head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.³

HAMLET. 'Tis very strange.⁴

HORATIO. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

HAMLET. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

MARCELLUS and BERNARDO. We do, my lord.

HAMLET. Arm'd, say you?

MARCELLUS and BERNARDO. Arm'd, my lord.

HAMLET. From top to toe?

MARCELLUS and BERNARDO. My lord, from head to foot.

[1] BERNARDO joins MARCELLUS down R.

[2] HAMLET looks rapidly at MARCELLUS and
BERNARDO, then at HORATIO.

[3] Pause.

[4] Sinks into his chair.

[1] *Pause.*

[2] *Rising.*

[3] *With a sign he draws them near to him.*

[4] *HORATIO retires up L.C. MARCELLUS and BERNARDO R.C., they meet C. at steps as if going.*

[5] *HAMLET turns to R.C. and up stage as he speaks.*

[6] *Facing HAMLET.*

[7] *Against R. column of C. arch.*

[8] *Looking in the direction of the throne.*

[9] *C. to L.*

[10] *From entrance L. They enter together, LAERTES on OPHELIA'S L., up stage, his R. arm around her shoulders. They advance to R.C. in front of HAMLET'S chair. LAERTES speaking as they do so.*

[11] *Taking both of OPHELIA'S hands in his, and facing her, he draws her near him.*

[12] *Looking up into his face.*

[13] *OPHELIA turns her face away, getting a shade below LAERTES, who speaks from her L. shoulder.*

[14] *She turns away a little to R. Her back towards LAERTES.*

[15] *Retaining his position.*

HAMLET. Then saw you not his face ?

HORATIO. O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up.

HAMLET. What, look'd he frowningly ?

HORATIO. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET. Pale or red ?

HORATIO. Nay, very pale.

HAMLET. And fix'd his eyes upon you ?

HORATIO. Most constantly.¹

HAMLET. I would I had been there.²

HORATIO. It would have much amazed you.

HAMLET. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long ?

HORATIO. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

MARCELLUS and BERNARDO. Longer, longer.

HORATIO. Not when I saw 't.

HAMLET. His beard was grizzled,—no ?

HORATIO. It was, as I have seen it in his life,

A sable silver'd.

HAMLET. I will watch to-night ;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO. I warrant it will.

HAMLET. If it assume my noble father's person,

I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape

And bid me hold my peace.³ I pray you all,

If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,

Let it be tenable in your silence still ;

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,

Give it an understanding, but no tongue :

I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.⁴

⁵ Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

I'll visit you.

⁶ ALL. Our duty to your honour.

HAMLET. Your loves, as mine to you : farewell.

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*]

⁷ My father's spirit in arms ! all is not well ;

I doubt some foul play : would the night were come !

Till then sit still, my soul : ⁸ foul deeds will rise,

Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit.*⁹]

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*¹⁰

LAERTES. My necessities are embark'd : farewell : ¹¹

And, sister, as the winds give benefit

And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,

But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA. ¹² Do you doubt that ?

LAERTES. For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,¹³

Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,

A violet in the youth of primy nature,

Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,

The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;

No more.

OPHELIA. No more but so ? ¹⁴

LAERTES.

[*Think it no more :*

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone

In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,

The inward service of the mind and soul

Grows wide withal.] ¹⁵ Perhaps he loves you now,

And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
 The virtue of his will : but you must fear,
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;
 [For he himself is subject to his birth :]
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends
 The safety and health of this whole state ;
 [And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body
 Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
 As he in his particular act and place
 May give his saying deed ; which is no further
 Then the main voice of Denmark goes withal.]
¹ Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list his songs,
 [Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd importunity.]
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.
 The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon :
 [Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes :
 The canker galls the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then ; best safety lies in fear :
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.]
² OPHELIA. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart.³ But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;
 Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own rede.

Enter POLONIUS.⁴

LAERTES. O, fear me not.
 I stay too long : but here my father comes.
 A double blessing is a double grace ;⁵
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.
 POLONIUS. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
 And you are stay'd for. There ; my blessing with thee!
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 Look thou charácter. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel ;
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
 Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
 Bear 't that the opposèd may beware of thee.
 Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice ;

[1] *Advancing, he gently turns her to him.
 She averts her face.*

[2] *As OPHELIA looks up before speaking
 LAERTES kisses her.*

[3] *Passes in front of LAERTES, towards L.,
 very slowly. Then as her thought
 comes to her, she turns again to him ;
 changing her manner and speaking
 with a lighter lift.*

[4] *From L. entrance. He comes to position
 in front of HAMLET'S chair R.C., no
 wand in this scene. As LAERTES is
 speaking OPHELIA retires up to R. of
 throne.*

[5] *Kneels in front of POLONIUS.*

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy.
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
 [And they in France of the best rank and station
 Are of a most select and generous chief in that.]
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
 This above all : to thine ownself be true,
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell : my blessing season this in thee! ¹

[1] Raising LAERTES and embracing him.

[2] Spoken after the embrace, with respectful formality.

[3] Turning to OPHELIA, who keeps her position by the throne.

[4] Kissing her, and bowing again to POLONIUS he turns up C. on his R. and goes out by C. steps and rostrum to L.

[5] Speaking without change of position R.C., down stage.

[6] Still by throne.

[7] A little towards OPHELIA.

[8] She leaves the throne, passing to front of QUEEN'S couch, turning away from POLONIUS.

[9] Following her, drawing closer.

[10] Looking down.

LAERTES. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.²

POLONIUS. The time invites you ; go ; your servants tend.

LAERTES.³ Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well

What I have said to you.

OPHELIA.

'Tis in my memory lock'd,

And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES. Farewell.⁴

[Exit.

POLONIUS. What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ? ⁵

OPHELIA. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.⁶

POLONIUS. Marry, well bethought.⁷

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late

Given private time to you ; and you yourself

Have of your audience been most free and bounteous :

If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,

And that in way of caution, I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly

As it behoves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you ? give me up the truth.

OPHELIA. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
 Of his affection to me.

POLONIUS. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
 Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them ?

⁸ OPHELIA. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

⁹ POLONIUS. Marry, I'll teach you : think yourself a baby ;
 That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,

Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly ;

Or—[not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Running it thus]—you'll tender me a fool.

¹⁰ OPHELIA. My lord, he hath importuned me with love
 In honourable fashion.

POLONIUS. Ay, fashion you may call it ; go to, go to.

OPHELIA. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
 With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POLONIUS. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
 When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
 Lends the tongue vows : these blazes, daughter,
 Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
 Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
 You must not take for fire. [From this time
 Be somewhat scancer of your maiden presence ;
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, that he is young,

And with a larger tether may he walk
 Than may be given you : in few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows ; for they are brokers,
 Not of that dye which their investments show,
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,
 The better to beguile.] This is for all :¹
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.

² Look to 't, I charge you : come your ways.

³ OPHELIA. I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

[1] *Approaching OPHELIA closely.*

[2] *Turning towards C. he signs to her to pass him. She does so.*

[3] *Up R.C. towards R. entrance she turns on her L. and inclines her head in obedience. All lights out. Traverse J. drawn. No light on Traverse.*

SCENE III

*The platform before the castle.*⁴

HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS are discovered.⁵

HAMLET.⁶ The air bites shrewdly ; it is very cold.

HORATIO. It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET.⁷ What hour now ?

HORATIO. I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET. No, it is struck.

HORATIO. Indeed ? I heard it not : then it draws near the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within.

⁸ What does this mean, my lord ?

⁹ HAMLET. The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
 Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels ;
 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
 The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO. Is it a custom ?

HAMLET. Ay, marry is 't :
 But to my mind, though I am native here
 And to the manner born, it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel east and west
 Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations :
 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition ; and indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.¹⁰
 [So, oft it chanceth in particular men,
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin—
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plausible manners, that these men,
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—

[4] *As Scene I.*

[5] HAMLET, wrapt in his cloak, is standing in C. archway.

HORATIO and MARCELLUS pace across the front of stage from R. to L., and stop at L. entrance, looking out.

[6] *Drawing his cloak closer.*

[7] *Ascending steps C.*

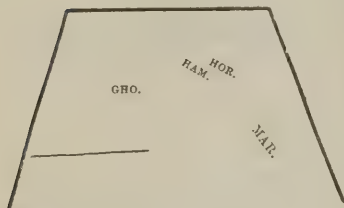
[8] *At HAMLET'S L.*

[9] *C. above line of stonepiece.*

[10] *Towards the end of speech HAMLET is facing HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*

[1] GHOST advances to R.C. in straight line from entrance R. Lighting as before from L. entrance.

[2] Laying his hand on HAMLET'S arm, and indicating R. entrance. HAMLET and HORATIO fall back a pace.



[3] Making a gesture with baton, the GHOST half turns towards R.

[4] The GHOST again waves its baton to the R.

[5] A pace in the direction of the GHOST. HORATIO checks HAMLET by laying his hand detainingly on his arm.

[6] The GHOST moves to R. a pace or two, stops, looks back at HAMLET.

[7] GHOST repeats action with baton.

[8] GHOST to entrance R.

[9] MARCELLUS passes quickly, as he speaks, to HAMLET'S R. behind HORATIO, making a gesture as though to detain HAMLET.

Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo—
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of base
Doth all the noble substance of worth dout,
To his own scandal.]

*Enter GHOST.*¹

HORATIO.

Look, my lord it comes! ²

HAMLET. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canonized bones, hearsèd in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[GHOST beckons HAMLET.]³

HORATIO. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

MARCELLUS. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removèd ground:
But do not go with it.

HORATIO.

No, by no means.

HAMLET. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HORATIO. Do not, my lord.

HAMLET.

Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself? ⁴

It waves me forth again: I'll follow it. ⁵

HORATIO. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord, ⁶

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason, ⁷
And draw you into madness? [think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.]

HAMLET.

It waves me still.

Go on; I'll follow thee. ⁸

MARCELLUS. ⁹ You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET.

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO. Be ruled ; you shall not go.

HAMLET.

My fate cries out,

And makes each petty artery in this body,

As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.¹

Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.²

³ By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!

I say, away! Go on ; I'll follow thee.⁴

[*Exeunt* GHOST and HAMLET.

HORATIO. He waxes desperate with imagination.⁵

MARCELLUS.⁶ Let's follow ; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

HORATIO. Have after. To what issue will this come ? ⁷

MARCELLUS. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO. Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS.

Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt*.⁸

[1] GHOST again waves.

[2] MARCELLUS and HORATIO still maintain the restraint of HAMLET.

[3] Throwing their hands off, breaking from them down stage, drawing his sword, he waves MARCELLUS back. The two men fall behind him.

[4] The GHOST goes out. HAMLET slowly following MARCELLUS and HORATIO make no movement until HAMLET has gone out.

[5] Looking after HAMLET.

[6] Making a movement to R.

[7] Going close to MARCELLUS.

[8] They go out R. slowly. Black out. All lights. Traverse J. drawn. Lights up front of Traverse to arranged lighting for Scene IV. At opening of scene Traverse J. is arranged to mask R. and L.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

SCENE IV

Another part of the platform.

Enter GHOST and HAMLET.⁹

HAMLET. Where wilt thou lead me ? speak ; I'll go no further.

GHOST. Mark me.¹⁰

HAMLET. I will.

GHOST. My hour is almost come,

When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames

Must render up myself.

HAMLET. Alas, poor ghost! ¹¹

GHOST. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing

To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET. Speak ; I am bound to hear.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET. What ?

GHOST. I am thy father's spirit,

Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,

And for the day confined to fast in fires,

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

[9] GHOST enters from L. through arch to R.O. against wall, stops as HAMLET, who follows, speaks.

[10] Turning slowly before speaking.

[11] At side of archway.

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
 Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part
 And each particular hair to stand on end,
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine :
 But this eternal blazon must not be
 To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

[1] *In grief he rests his face on his arm,
 leaning on the wall.*

HAMLET. O God! ¹

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

[2] *The word long-draw—tense.*

HAMLET. Murder! ²

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;
 But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

[3] *A pace to the GHOST. With passion,
 rapidly.*

HAMLET.³ Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift
 As meditation or the thoughts of love,
 May sweep to my revenge.

[4] *Turns more directly to HAMLET.
 Lights commence to grow slowly at
 this cue.*

GHOST. I find thee apt ;
 [And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
 That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
 Wouldst thou not stir in this.] Now, Hamlet, hear : ⁴
 'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
 A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forgèd process of my death
 Rankly abused : but know, thou noble youth,
 The serpent that did sting thy father's life
 Now wears his crown.

[5] *As HAMLET speaks this line he turns
 down stage to his left sufficiently to clear
 the archway.*

HAMLET. ⁵ O my prophetic soul!
 My uncle!

GHOST. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
 With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—
 [O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
 So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen :
 [O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
 From me, whose love was of that dignity
 That it went hand in hand even with the vow
 I made to her in marriage, and to decline
 Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
 To those of mine!
 But virtue, as it never will be moved,
 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
 Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
 And prey on garbage.]
 But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air ;
 Brief let me be.⁶ Sleeping within my orchard,
 My custom always of the afternoon,
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of cursèd hebenon in a vial,
 And in the porches of my ears did pour
 The leperous distilment ; whose effect
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man
 That swift as quicksilver it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body,
 [And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,

[6] *At R. side of archway. HAMLET below
 to the L., facing GHOST.*

The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.]

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd :
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

HAMLET. O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

GHOST. If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damnèd incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught : leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once! ¹
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire :
Adieu, adieu! ² Hamlet, remember me. ³

[Exit. ⁴

HAMLET. O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart ;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. ⁵ Remember thee! ⁶
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. ⁷ Remember thee!

⁸ Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there ;
⁹ And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter : yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling; damnèd villain!

¹⁰ My tables,—meet it is I set it down, ¹¹
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark :
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word ; ¹³
It is *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*

[Writing. ¹²

I have sworn 't.

MARCELLUS and HORATIO. [Within.] My lord, my lord,—

MARCELLUS. [Within.] Lord Hamlet,—

HORATIO. [Within.] Heaven secure him!

HAMLET. So be it! ¹⁴

HORATIO [within]. Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAMLET. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come. ¹⁵

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS. ¹⁶

MARCELLUS. How is 't, my noble lord? ¹⁷

HORATIO. What news, my lord? ¹⁸

HAMLET. O, wonderful! ¹⁹

HORATIO. Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET. No ; you'll reveal it. ²⁰

HORATIO. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

[1] Moves into arch.

[2] Moves slowly away through arch.

[3] This line long-drawn.

[4] To the R.

[5] Up stage to L. side of arch.

[6] With tenderness.

[7] With intensity coming R.C.

[8] Speaking rapidly.

[9] With deeper measure.

[10] Sheathes his sword.

[11] Finds tablets.

[12] He goes to the R. side of arch, resting his tablets against the stone.

[13] He goes into the archway looking in the direction the GHOST has taken.

[14] Maintaining his position. Puts away his tablets.

[15] Looking towards R. down stage.

[16] From R., MARCELLUS first. He advances towards HAMLET to C. HORATIO to R.C.

[17] Speaking as he enters.

[18] Almost simultaneously.

[19] Crossing in front of MARCELLUS who drops to his L. HORATIO, R.C. HAMLET, C. MARCELLUS, L.C.

[20] Looking from one to the other.

[1] *Breaks off—pause.*

[2] *Crossing to L.*

[3] *MARCELLUS turns to HORATIO, the two standing R.C. together.*

[4] *Advancing to C.*

[5] *Turns on his L. up to arch.*

[6] *Coming behind the two men and between them.*

[7] *Putting his arms round their shoulders. MARCELLUS on his L., HORATIO on his R.*

[8] *He draws his sword.*

[9] *His hand to the sword blade; MARCELLUS also advances his hand.*

[10] *Going to L. in front of MARCELLUS, who then passes behind HAMLET to his L., as HORATIO comes to his R.*

[11] *They do so.*

[12] *Turns away to R.*

MARCELLUS.

Nor I, my lord.

HAMLET. How say you, then; would heart of man once think it? ¹
But you'll be secret?

HORATIO and MARCELLUS. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

HAMLET. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark,
But he's an arrant knave.²

HORATIO. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.³

HAMLET. ⁴ Why, right; you are i' the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:
You, as your business and desire shall point you:
For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is; and for mine own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.⁵

HORATIO. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, 'faith, heartily.

HORATIO. There's no offence, my lord.

HAMLET.⁶ Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may.⁷ And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

HORATIO. What is't, my lord? we will.

HAMLET. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

HORATIO and MARCELLUS. My lord, we will not.

HAMLET.

Nay, but swear't.

HORATIO.

In faith,

My lord, not I.

MARCELLUS. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET. Upon my sword.⁸

MARCELLUS.

We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAMLET. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST [*beneath*]. Swear.

HAMLET. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-
penny?

Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage—
Consent to swear.

HORATIO. Propose the oath, my lord.⁹

HAMLET. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.

GHOST [*beneath*]. Swear.

HAMLET. *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our ground.

Come hither, gentlemen,¹⁰

And lay your hands again upon my sword: ¹¹

Never to speak of this that you have heard,

Swear by my sword.

GHOST [*beneath*]. Swear.

[HAMLET. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.]

HORATIO. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange! ¹²

HAMLET. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come ;
 Here, as before,¹ never, so help you mercy,
 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
 As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
 To put an antic disposition on,
 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
 As *Well, well, we know, or We could, an if we would,*
 [*Or If we list to speak, or There be, an if they might,*]
 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
 That you know aught of me : this not to do,
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
 Swear.²

GHOST [*beneath*]. Swear.

HAMLET. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear.*]³ So, gentle-
 men,⁴

With all my love I do commend me to you :
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;⁵
⁶ And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint : O cursed spite,
 That ever I was born to set it right!
 Nay, come,⁷ let's go together.

Curtain.

[1] *Moves to C., holding out the sword.*
 MARCELLUS to his L., HORATIO to his R.

[2] MARCELLUS and HORATIO touch the sword.

[3] HAMLET raises the sword blade. HORATIO and MARCELLUS kiss it in turn.

[4] *Sheathing the sword.*

[5] *He crosses to the R.*

[6] *Turns to face them.*

[*Exeunt.*

[7] *He extends his arms to HORATIO and MARCELLUS. HORATIO crosses to his left hand, MARCELLUS to his right. He turns, placing his arms around their shoulders in affection, and they pass out R.*

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE I

A room of state in the castle.¹

POLONIUS and REYNALDO, *discovered.*²

[1] *Same as Act I, Scene II.*

[2] POLONIUS R.C. REYNALDO *standing a few paces away and below him.*

[3] *Handing them.*

[4] *Bowing as he takes them.*

[5] *Approaching REYNALDO and tapping his arm.*

POLONIUS. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.³

REYNALDO. I will, my lord.⁴

POLONIUS. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,⁵
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.

REYNALDO. My lord, I did intend it.

[POLONIUS. Marry, well said ; very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris ;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense ; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it :
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;
As thus, *I know his father and his friends,*
And in part him : do you mark this, Reynaldo ?

REYNALDO. Ay, very well, my lord.

POLONIUS. *And in part him ; but, you may say, not well :*
But, if 't be he I mean, he's very wild ;
Addicted so and so : and there put on him
What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

REYNALDO. As gaming, my lord.

POLONIUS. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing : you may go so far.

REYNALDO. My lord, that would dishonour him.

POLONIUS. 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency ;
That's not my meaning : but breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in un reclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

REYNALDO. But, my good lord,—

POLONIUS. Wherefore should you do this ?

REYNALDO. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

POLONIUS. Marry, sir, here's my drift ;
And, I believe, it is a fetch of wit :
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
 He closes with you in this consequence ;
Good sir, or so, or friend, or gentleman,
 According to the phrase or the addition
 Of man and country.

REYNALDO. Very good, my lord.

POLONIUS. And then, sir, does he this—he does—what was I about to say ? By the mass, I was about to say something : where did I leave ?

REYNALDO. *At closes in the consequence, at friend or so, and gentleman.*

POLONIUS. *At closes in the consequence, ay, marry ;*
 He closes thus : *I know the gentleman ;*
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
Or then, or then ; with such, or such ; and, as you say,
There was a' gaming ; there o'ertook in's rouse ;
There falling out at tennis : or perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

See you how ;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth :
 And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
 With windlasses and with assays of bias,
 By indirections find directions out :
 So by my former lecture and advice,
 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not ?

REYNALDO. My lord, I have.

POLONIUS. God be wi' you ; fare you well.

REYNALDO. Good my lord !]

POLONIUS. Observe his inclination in yourself.¹

REYNALDO. I shall, my lord.

POLONIUS. And let him ply his music.

REYNALDO.

Well, my lord.

POLONIUS. Farewell !²

[Exit REYNALDO.]

*Enter OPHELIA.*³

How now, Ophelia ! what's the matter ?

OPHELIA. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted !

POLONIUS. With what, i' the name of God ?

OPHELIA.⁴ My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber,
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced ;
 No hat upon his head ; his stockings foul'd,
 Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle ;
 Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other ;
 And with a look so piteous in purport
 As if he had been loosèd out of hell
 To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

POLONIUS. Mad for thy love ?

OPHELIA. My lord, I do not know ;

But truly, I do fear it.

POLONIUS. What said he ?

OPHELIA. He took me by the wrist and held me hard ;
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;
 And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
 He falls to such perusal of my face
 As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;
 At last, a little shaking of mine arm

[1] *With uplifted finger.*

[2] REYNALDO bows low, turns up L.C. behind throne to entrance L., at which he bows again before exit.

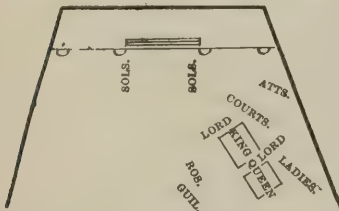
[3] From R. on rostrum she comes quickly and excitedly down C. steps, to POLONIUS on his L. as he is moving to R. entrance.

[4] C. POLONIUS R.C.

- [1] *Turning and moving to R.*
 [2] *Returning.*

- [3] *Moves towards R. entrance.*
 [4] *Standing above entrance.*

- [5] OPHELIA crosses him and goes out first.
 [6] A moment's pause. Trumpets off L.
 [7] SOLDIERS enter by rostrum from L., and form on each side of C. arch in line up and down stage. The KING and QUEEN enter, QUEEN on KING'S L. hand. He passes her to her chair L. of throne and then seats himself. Several COURTIERS and two LORDS follow behind the KING, two LADIES behind the QUEEN. LORDS to R. and L. of throne, LADIES behind QUEEN'S chair. All, but the LORD who takes position on R. of throne, going behind it to places. After the KING is seated ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN come down C. steps, followed by several ATTENDANTS, who stand at back L. ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN advance and kneel.



- [8] *Soldiers exeunt as ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN kneel.*
 [9] *ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN rise as the KING motions them.*

And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
 And end his being : that done, he lets me go :
 And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
 He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;
 For out o' doors he went without their helps,
 And, to the last, bended their light on me.

POLONIUS. Come, go with me :¹ I will go seek the king.
 This is the very ecstasy of love,²

Whose violent property fordoes itself
 And leads the will to desperate undertakings
 As oft as any passion under heaven
 That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
 What, have you given him any hard words of late ?

OPHELIA. No, my good lord, but, as you did command,
 I did repel his letters and denied
 His access to me.

POLONIUS. That hath made him mad.
 I am sorry that with better heed and judgement
 I had not quoted him : I fear'd he did but trifle,
 And meant to wreck thee ; [but, beshrew my jealousy!
 By heaven, it is as proper to our age
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
 As it is common for the younger sort
 To lack discretion.³] Come, [go we to the king :]
 This must be known ; which, being kept close, might move⁴
 More grief to hide than hate to utter love.
 Come.⁵

[*Exeunt.*⁶

Enter SOLDIERS, KING, QUEEN, *several* COURTIERS, LORDS, LADIES,
 ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN AND ATTENDANTS.⁷

⁸ KING. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,
 The need we have to use you did provoke
 Our hasty sending.⁹ Something have you heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation ; [so call it,
 Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was.] What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from the understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of : I entreat you both,
 [That, being of so young days brought up with him,
 And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour,]
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time : so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you ;
 And sure I am two men there are not living
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry and good will
 As to expend your time with us awhile,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,

Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ.

Both your majesties

Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN. But we both obey,

And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

KING. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz :

And I beseech you instantly to visit

My too much changèd son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.¹

[GUILDENSTERN. Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him.

QUEEN.

Ay, amen!]

Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some ATTENDANTS.

Enter POLONIUS.²

POLONIUS. [The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

KING. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS. Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king :
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do.] My lord, I do think that I have found*
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING. O, speak of that ; that do I long to hear.

[POLONIUS. Give first admittance to the ambassadors ;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

KING. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

QUEEN. I doubt it is no other but the main ;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

KING. Well, we shall sift him.

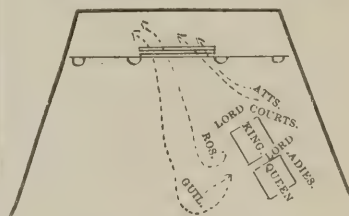
Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway ?

VOLTIMAND. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies ; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack ;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness ; whereat grieved,
That so his sickness, age and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
On Fortinbras ; which he, in brief, obeys ;
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.

[1] Two ATTENDANTS pass to positions L. of C. arch and await ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, who severally bow to the KING and QUEEN and pass up C. and go out by rostrum to R., followed by attendants.



[2] From R. entrance, carrying wand. Advancing to front of throne, he bows and speaks with windy importance. He holds a letter in his hand.

* NOTE.—The words "My lord, I do think" would naturally be omitted in using the full text.

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
 And his commission to employ those soldiers,
 So levied as before, against the Polack :
 With an entreaty, herein further shown,
 That it might please you to give quiet pass
 Through your dominions for this enterprise,
 On such regards of safety and allowance
 As therein are set down.

[Giving a paper.]

KING. It likes us well ;
 And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business.
 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour :
 Go to your rest ; at night we'll feast together :
 Most welcome home!

[Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]

POLONIUS. This business is well ended.]
 My liege, and madam, to expostulate
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
 I will be brief : your noble son is mad :
 Mad call I it ; for, to define true madness,
 What is 't but to be nothing else but mad ?
 But let that go.

QUEEN. More matter, with less art.

POLONIUS. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true : 'tis true 'tis pity ;
 And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure ;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him, then : and now remains
 That we find out the cause of this effect,
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
 For this effect defective comes by cause :
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend.

I have a daughter—have while she is mine—

Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this : now gather, and surmise.

[Reads.]

To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,—

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase ; beautified is a vile phrase :
 but you shall hear. Thus :

[Reads.]

In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.

QUEEN. Came this from Hamlet to her ?

POLONIUS. Good madam, stay awhile, I will be faithful.

[Reads.]

Doubt thou the stars are fire ;

Doubt that the sun doth move ;

Doubt truth to be a liar ;

But never doubt I love.

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers ; I have not art to reckon
 my groans : but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.*

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this
 machine is to him, HAMLET.*

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means and place,
All given to mine ear.

KING. But how hath she
Received his love ?

POLONIUS. What do you think of me ?

KING. As of a man faithful and honourable.

POLONIUS. I would fain prove so. But what might you
think,

[When I had seen this hot love on the wing—
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me—what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,]
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight ;
What might you think ? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak :
*Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star ;
This must not be :* and then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;
And he, repuls'd—a short tale to make—
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.

KING. Do you think 'tis this ?

QUEEN. It may be, very likely.

POLONIUS. Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know that—
That I have positively said *'Tis so*,
When it proved otherwise ?

KING. Not that I know.

POLONIUS [*pointing to his head and shoulder*]. Take this from this,
if it be otherwise :

[If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre].

KING. How may we try it further ?

POLONIUS. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.¹

QUEEN. So he does indeed.

POLONIUS. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :
Be you and I behind an arras then ;
Mark the encounter : if he love her not
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

KING. We will try it.

QUEEN. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.

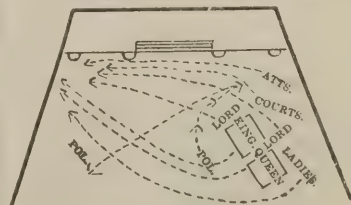
POLONIUS. Away, I do beesech you, both away :
I'll board him presently. O, give me leave :²

[*Exeunt KING, QUEEN, and ATTENDANTS.*]

[1] *Pointing C. to R.*

[2] *In entreaty to the KING, who rises, taking the QUEEN'S hand and leading her quickly to R. exit, followed informally by all. POLONIUS steps back as KING rises.*

The KING and QUEEN pass in front of him. He then turns and ushers the two LORDS and COURTIERs away, the LADIES follow in front of QUEEN'S chair, and the ATTENDANTS pass above him, finally, behind all, he follows to R., turning as HAMLET comes C.



[1] HAMLET from R. on rostrum to C. Looks up from his book as POLONIUS addresses him.

[2] HAMLET descends steps and stands C. POLONIUS R.C., below him.

[3] HAMLET turns away a little to L.C.

[4] Turning abruptly to POLONIUS.

[5] To L. resuming book.

[6] POLONIUS a little away to R.

[7] Towards HAMLET.

[8] Coming L.C. pointing to the page of book.

[9] Up stage C.

[10] Giving to R.

[11] Towards entrance R.

[12] At entrance. Bows.

[13] Facing POLONIUS from his position up stage.

[14] Bows again. He is a little away from the entrance and as ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN appear he steps back above it making way for them. They pass him to R.C.

[15] HAMLET crosses to L.C. to the throne.

[16] GUILDENSTERN is above ROSENCRANTZ.

[17] Both make obeisance to HAMLET.

[18] Throwing his book on the throne, and advancing to meet them C.

[19] He greets GUILDENSTERN, who is a trifle in advance of ROSENCRANTZ, and passes him to ROSENCRANTZ, falling thus between them.

*Enter HAMLET, reading.*¹

How does my good Lord Hamlet ?

HAMLET. Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS. Do you know me, my lord ?

HAMLET. Excellent well ; you are a fishmonger.²

POLONIUS. Not I, my lord.

HAMLET. Then I would you were so honest a man.³

POLONIUS. Honest, my lord !

HAMLET. Ay, sir ; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS. That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion,⁴—Have you a daughter ?

POLONIUS. I have, my lord.

HAMLET. Let her not walk i' the sun : conception is a blessing : but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.⁵

POLONIUS. How say you by that ?⁶ [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter : yet he knew me not at first ; he said I was a fishmonger : he is far gone, far gone : and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love ; very near this. I'll speak to him again.⁷—What do you read, my lord ?

HAMLET. Words, words, words.

POLONIUS. What is the matter, my lord ?

HAMLET. Between who ?

POLONIUS. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

HAMLET. Slanders, sir :⁸ for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams : all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.⁹

POLONIUS [*aside*].¹⁰ Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord ?

HAMLET. Into my grave.

POLONIUS. Indeed, that is out o' the air. [*Aside.*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are ! [a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of.] I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.¹¹—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.¹²

HAMLET.¹³ You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal : except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS. Fare you well, my lord.¹⁴

HAMLET. These tedious old fools !¹⁵

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

POLONIUS. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet ; there he is.

ROSENCRANTZ [*to POLONIUS*]. God save you, sir!

[*Exit POLONIUS.*]

GUILDENSTERN. My honoured lord !¹⁶

ROSENCRANTZ. My most dear lord !¹⁷

HAMLET.¹⁸ My excellent good friends !¹⁹ How dost thou, Guildenstern ? Ah, Rosencrantz ! Good lads, how do ye both ?

ROSENCRANTZ. As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN. Happy, in that we are not over-happy ;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAMLET. Nor the soles of her shoe ?

ROSENCRANTZ. Neither, my lord.

HAMLET. [Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours ?

GUILDENSTERN. 'Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET. In the secret parts of fortune ? O, most true ; she is a strumpet.] What's the news ?

ROSENCRANTZ. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

HAMLET. Then is doomsday near : but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular : what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither ?

GUILDENSTERN. Prison, my lord!

HAMLET. Denmark's a prison.

[ROSENCRANTZ. Then is the world one.

HAMLET. A goodly one ; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.]

ROSENCRANTZ. We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, then, 'tis none to you ; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so :¹ to me it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ. Why then, your ambition makes it one ; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

GUILDENSTERN. Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

HAMLET. A dream itself is but a shadow.

[ROSENCRANTZ. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAMLET. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court ? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. We'll wait upon you.

HAMLET. No such matter : I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.]² But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore ?

ROSENCRANTZ. To visit you, my lord ; no other occasion.

HAMLET. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks ; but I thank you : [and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a half-penny.] Were you not sent for ? Is it your own inclining ? Is it a free visitation ? Come, deal justly with me : come, come ; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN. What should we say, my lord ?

HAMLET. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for ; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour : I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ. To what end, my lord ?

HAMLET. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, [by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal,] be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no ?

ROSENCRANTZ [to GUILDENSTERN]. What say you ?³

[1] *Pause ; he goes to the throne, standing in front of it.*

[2] *Changing his manner and turning to them again.*

HAMLET, L.C. GUILDENSTERN, R.C.
ROSENCRANTZ, R.

[3] *Turning to GUILDENSTERN.*

[1] *Advancing a step.* ROSENCRANTZ gets above him, to L.C.

[2] *Going up to C. arch.* GUILDENSTERN to R. turning to face HAMLET. HAMLET up C. ROSENCRANTZ L.C. GUILDENSTERN, R.

[3] *Coming down stage.*

[4] *Players' tucket sounded off stage R.*

HAMLET. Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN. My lord, we were sent for.¹

HAMLET. I will tell you why ; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moults no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I knew not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises ; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave² o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me : no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAMLET. Why did you laugh then, when I said *man delights not me*?

ROSENCRANTZ. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you ; we coted them on the way ; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

HAMLET. He that plays the king shall be welcome ; his majesty shall have tribute of me ; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target ; the lover shall not sigh gratis ; [the humorous man shall end his part in peace ; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the sere ; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't.] What players are they?³

ROSENCRANTZ. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.⁴

[HAMLET. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROSENCRANTZ. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

HAMLET. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

ROSENCRANTZ. No, indeed, are they not.

HAMLET. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

ROSENCRANTZ. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace : but there is, sir, an airy of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for 't : these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

HAMLET. What, are they children? who maintains them? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

ROSENCRANTZ. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides ; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy : there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAMLET. Is 't possible?

GUILDENSTERN. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAMLET. Do the boys carry it away?

ROSENCRANTZ. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

HAMLET. It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.]

GUILDENSTERN. There are the players.

HAMLET.¹ Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, [come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours.] You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUILDENSTERN. In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a hernshaw.

POLONIUS [off]. Well be with you, gentlemen!²

HAMLET. Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too:³ [at each ear a hearer:]⁴ that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.⁵

[ROSENCRANTZ. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.]

HAMLET. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.

Re-enter POLONIUS.⁶

You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

POLONIUS. My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

POLONIUS. The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET. Buz, buz!

POLONIUS. Upon mine honour,—

HAMLET. *Then came each actor on his ass,—*⁷

POLONIUS.⁸ The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. [For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.]

HAMLET. *O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!*

POLONIUS. What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET. Why,

*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he lovèd passing well.*

POLONIUS [aside]. Still on my daughter.⁹

HAMLET. [Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

POLONIUS. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

HAMLET. Nay, that follows not.

POLONIUS. What follows, then, my lord?

HAMLET. Why,

As by lot, God wot,

and then, you know,

[1] Advancing to ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN and taking them by the hands in turn, ROSENCRANTZ first, so that, as he passes to GUILDENSTERN, ROSENCRANTZ moves to R.C. behind him.

[2] At the sound of POLONIUS's voice, HAMLET turns up to L. of C. arch, looking off stage to R.

[3] To ROSENCRANTZ.

[4] Indicating POLONIUS, off.

[5] GUILDENSTERN passes, from his position R., up stage to behind HAMLET, looking off. ROSENCRANTZ also goes up a little.

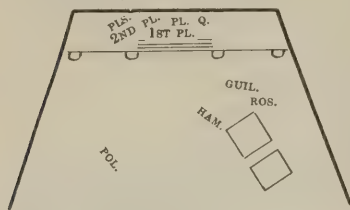
[6] POLONIUS comes to C. on rostrum from the R.

[7] Moves down stage to near throne, L.C.

[8] POLONIUS descends the steps C. as he speaks and follows HAMLET.

[9] Goes to R.C. as PLAYERS enter.

- [1] From the R. on rostrum. As the PLAYERS enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN drop down to above throne. FIRST PLAYER and PLAYER QUEEN stand C. on rostrum, others to the R.



- [2] Going to steps C.
 [3] To FIRST PLAYER, taking him by the hand and causing him to descend steps.
 [4] FIRST PLAYER gets to position below R. column of C. arch.
 [5] Causing PLAYER QUEEN to advance down steps.
 [6] PLAYER QUEEN to FIRST PLAYER. The others follow and form group up stage, R.C.
 [7] Crosses as he speaks in the direction of the QUEEN'S chair.
 [8] FIRST PLAYER to C.
 [9] Turning to FIRST PLAYER.

- [10] Turns L. in thought, in front of the QUEEN'S chair.

- [11] Turns facing PLAYER as the words come to him.

- [12] He seats himself in the QUEEN'S chair and with a wave of the hand draws ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN near him. They stand at the back of the chair.

It came to pass, as most like it was,—

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more ; for look, where my abridgement comes.]

*Enter four or five PLAYERS.*¹

² You are welcome, masters ; welcome, all. [I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends.] ³ O, my old friend! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last : comest thou to beard me in Denmark ?⁴ ⁵ What, my young lady and mistress! By 'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. [Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.] Masters, you are all welcome.⁶ We'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see : we'll have a speech straight : come, give us a taste⁷ of your quality ; come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAYER. What speech, my lord ?⁸

HAMLET.⁹ I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted ; or, if it was, not above once ; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviare to the general : but it was —[as I received it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine]—an excellent play [well digested in the sceries, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallies in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation ; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine]. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido ; [and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter :] if it live in your memory, begin at this line : let me see, let me see—¹⁰

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,—

it is not so :—it begins with Pyrrhus :—

¹¹ *The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
 Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
 When he lay couchèd in the ominous horse,
 [Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
 With heraldry more dismal ; head to foot
 Now is he total gules ; horridly trick'd
 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
 That lend a tyrannous and damned light
 To their lord's murder : roasted in wrath and fire,
 And thus o'er-sizèd with coagulate gore,]
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandsire Priam seeks.*

So, proceed you.¹²

POLONIUS. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

FIRST PLAYER.

*Anon he finds him
 Striking too short at Greeks ; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command : unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage strikes wide ;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 The unnervèd father falls. [Then senseless Ilium,*

*Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.]*

*But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Arousèd vengeance sets him new a-work;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forged for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! [All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!]*

POLONIUS. This is too long.

HAMLET. It shall be the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps: say on: come to Hecuba.

FIRST PLAYER. *But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen—*

HAMLET. *The mobled queen?*

POLONIUS. That's good; mobled queen is good.

FIRST PLAYER. *Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
[About her lank and all o'er-teemèd loins,]
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:
But if the gods themselves did see her then
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
[Unless things mortal move them not at all,]
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.*

POLONIUS. Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in 's eyes. Pray you, no more.¹

HAMLET.² 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.³
Good my lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

POLONIUS. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAMLET. God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

POLONIUS. Come, sirs.⁴

[1] *With a movement of expostulation towards FIRST PLAYER.*

[2] *Rising, and advancing to FIRST PLAYER, C.*

[3] *To POLONIUS as FIRST PLAYER making obeisance to HAMLET rejoins the group up stage, R.C. HAMLET keeps position C.*

[4] *He goes to above entrance R., and signifies that the PLAYERS shall pass out;*

[1] *The PLAYERS go, but HAMLET stays the first with a gesture, and he comes to him C.*

[2] *PLAYER bows low to HAMLET, goes to entrance R. and bows again before going.*

[3] *Turning to ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, who have come to below the QUEEN'S chair L.*

[4] *Advancing to C., bowing to HAMLET and passing to C. steps followed by GUILDENSTERN, who also bows. They go out R. by rostrum.*

[5] *At R. column of C. arch watching them go.*

[6] *To C. of stage.*

[7] *He pauses. Goes slowly to the L. and sits in the QUEEN'S chair facing L. down stage.*

[8] *Resuming with intensity, but in lower strain.*

[9] *Pause—springing to his feet, his voice rising as he paces to R.*

[10] *In passion he crosses to throne—speaking with violence and threatening gesture to the place of the KING.*

[11] *After a pause, in bitter self-contempt.*

[12] *Crossing to C.*

HAMLET. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.¹
[Exit POLONIUS with all the PLAYERS but the First.] Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

FIRST PLAYER. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in 't, could you not?

FIRST PLAYER. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not.² [Exit FIRST PLAYER.]³ My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ. Good my lord!⁴

HAMLET. Ay, so, God be wi' ye; [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.] Now I am alone.⁵

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,⁶
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.⁷

⁸ Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. ⁹ Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
[Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?]
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Ha!

'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter,¹⁰ or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!

¹¹ Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon't! foh! ¹² About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play

Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions ;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ.¹ I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle : ² I'll observe his looks ;
I'll tent him to the quick : if he but blench,
I know my course.³ The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil : and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds
More relative than this : ⁴ the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Curtain.

[1] *To R.*

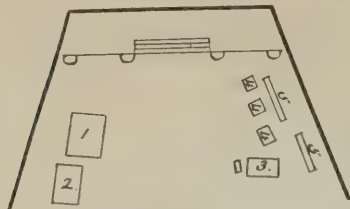
[2] *Turning to face throne, but keeping R.*

[3] *Up stage C.*

[4] *His voice rising.*

[*Exit.*⁵

[5] *Up steps by rostrum to L.*



Numbers in Diagram.

1. KING'S throne.
2. QUEEN'S chair.
3. Chair for OPHELIA, with stool.
4. Chairs for LADIES.
5. Benches.

[1] The QUEEN is seated in chair down stage L.C. OPHELIA stands at her side up stage. POLONIUS in front of the QUEEN'S throne chair R.C. ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN are together towards C., facing the KING who stands in front of throne.

[2] They bow both to the KING and QUEEN and up to C. arch, bowing again at the steps. Exit C. to R. POLONIUS follows to C. steps.

[3] Advancing C. extending his hand to the QUEEN who rises and meets him.

[4] With an inclination of the head.

[5] Turns from the KING on her R., going to OPHELIA, who has advanced clear of chair.

[6] Turns on her L., the KING takes her right hand, leading her to above throne. She goes out R. KING to R.C.

ACT THE THIRD

SCENE I

A room of state in the castle.

¹ KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN discovered.

KING. And can you, by no drift of conference
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
[Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?]

ROSENCRANTZ. He does confess he feels himself distracted ;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

[GUILDENSTERN. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.]

QUEEN. Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ. Most like a gentleman.

[GUILDENSTERN. But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROSENCRANTZ. Niggard of question ; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.]

QUEEN. Did you assay him

To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way : of these we told him ;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it : they are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

POLONIUS. 'Tis most true :

And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

KING. With all my heart ; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.²

KING. ³ Sweet Gertrude, leave us too ;

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia :

Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If 't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN. I shall obey you.⁴

⁵ And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.⁶

OPHELIA. Madam, I wish it may.¹

[Exit QUEEN.]

POLONIUS.² Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [To OPHELIA.] Read on this book ;³
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness.⁴ [We are oft to blame in this,—
'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.]

KING. [Aside.] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word ;
O heavy burthen!] I hear him coming : let's withdraw, my lord.⁵

[Exeunt KING and POLONIUS.]

Enter HAMLET.⁶

HAMLET. To be, or not to be : that is the question :
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them ?⁷ To die : to sleep ;
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep ;
To sleep : perchance to dream : ay, there's the rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause : there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life ;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of ?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.⁸—Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

OPHELIA. Good, my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day ?

HAMLET. I humbly thank you ; well, well, well.

OPHELIA. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,

[1] OPHELIA bends her head.

[2] Coming down to OPHELIA.

[3] Gives book.

[4] Up stage C. to L. of C. arch.

[5] The KING, who has remained R.C., looks towards entrance C. POLONIUS approaches him and they go out, R. up stage. OPHELIA turns up C., looks off towards R. and then goes to the throne, half hiding above it.

[6] From C. In deep thought he approaches chair L.C. ; standing at the commencement of speech.

[7] Sits.

[8] OPHELIA passes in front of the throne to above the QUEEN'S chair R.C. HAMLET sees her, he rises.

[1] *Coming down towards c.*

[2] *Advancing jewels.*

[3] *Turns up.*

[4] *Facing OPHELIA, above her.*

[5] *Approaching her.*

[6] *Looking on the ground.*

[7] *Turns from her to L.*

[8] *Without movement.*

[9] *Crossing above OPHELIA to corner of throne, up stage.*

[10] *Turning towards OPHELIA.*

[11] *Advancing, OPHELIA retreats a little before him to L.C.*

[12] *Speaking loudly in suspicion.*

[13] *Up to steps c.*

[14] *Facing L.*

[15] *Coming to c. of stage.*

[16] *Up stage.*

[17] *Facing L. again.*

[18] *As HAMLET advances towards her, OPHELIA shrinks away in front of him toward R.C.*

[19] *HAMLET turns up stage again.*

[20] *C. to R.*

[21] *After HAMLET has gone, OPHELIA turns on her left hand and crosses to column L. of c. arch, looking after him, before she speaks.*

That I have longèd long to re-deliver ;

I pray you, now receive them.¹

HAMLET.

No, not I ;

I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did ;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich : their perfume lost,
Take these again ; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.²

HAMLET. Ha, ha! are you honest ?

OPHELIA. My lord ?

HAMLET. Are you fair ?

OPHELIA. What means your lordship ?

HAMLET. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should
admit no discourse to your beauty.

OPHELIA. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than
with honesty ?

HAMLET.³ Ay, truly ;⁴ for the power of beauty will sooner trans-
form honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty
can translate beauty into his likeness : this was sometime a paradox,
but now the time gives it proof.⁵ I did love you once.

OPHELIA. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.⁶

HAMLET. You should not have believed me ; for virtue cannot so
innoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it : I loved you not.⁷

OPHELIA. I was the more deceived.⁸

HAMLET. Get thee to a nunnery : why wouldst thou be a breeder
of sinners ?⁹ I am myself indifferent honest ; but yet I could accuse
me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me :
I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my
beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them
shape, or time to act them in.¹⁰ What should such fellows as I do
crawling between earth and heaven ? We are arrant knaves, all ;
believe none of us.¹¹ Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your
father ?

OPHELIA. At home, my lord.

HAMLET.¹² Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the
fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.¹³

OPHELIA. O help him, you sweet heavens! ¹⁴

¹⁵ HAMLET. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy
dowry : be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not
escape calumny.¹⁶ Get thee to a nunnery. Go, farewell.¹⁷ Or, if
thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool ; for wise men know well enough
what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go ; and quickly
too.¹⁸ Farewell.¹⁹

OPHELIA. O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God
has given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig,
you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make
your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on 't ; it hath
made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that
are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they
are. To a nunnery, go. [Exit.²⁰

OPHELIA.²¹ O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword ;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,

The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
 And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
 That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh ;
 That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
 Blasted with ecstasy : ¹ O woe is me,
 To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

[Exit.

[1] Turns and goes out entrance L.

*Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.*²

KING. Love! his affections do not that way tend ;
 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;
 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
 Will be some danger : which for to prevent,
 I have in quick determination
 Thus set it down : he shall with speed to England,
 For the demand of our neglected tribute :
 Haply the seas and countries different
 With variable objects shall expel
 This something-settled matter in his heart,
 Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
 From fashion of himself. What think you on 't ?

POLONIUS. It shall do well : but yet do I believe
 The origin and commencement of his grief
 Sprung from neglected love. [How now, Ophelia!
 You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said ;
 We heard it all. My lord,] do as you please ;
 But, if you hold it fit, after the play
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief : let her be round with him ;
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference.
 *For as you said, and wisely was it said,
 'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
 Since nature makes them partial, should overhear
 The speech of vantage. If she find him not,
 To England send him, or confine him where
 Your wisdom best shall think.

KING. It shall be so : ³
 Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

[Exeunt.⁴

[3] Going towards L. entrance.

[4] L.

*Enter HAMLET and three of the PLAYERS.*⁵

HAMLET. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you,
 trippingly on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as many of your
 players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not
 saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently ; for
 in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of
 passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it
 smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-
 pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears
 of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but
 inexplicable dumb-shows and noise : I would have such a fellow
 whipped for o'erdoing Termagant ; it out-herods Herod : pray you,
 avoid it.⁶

[5] HAMLET, who enters with the PLAYERS C.,
 speaks as he descends the steps. The
 PLAYERS follow him, standing a little
 up stage, L.C. FIRST PLAYER below the
 others, C. HAMLET, R.C.

[6] Turns R.

* These four lines of Polonius' are transferred from Scene II of this Act as the entrance there then is omitted.

[1] *Advancing to FIRST PLAYER.*

[2] *He crosses the FIRST PLAYER, going to chair L.C. FIRST PLAYER to R.C. Others, at back, move a little to behind FIRST PLAYER.*

[3] *Sits.*

[4] *All bow to HAMLET and exeunt C., FIRST PLAYER preceding.*

[5] *From R. entrance.*

[6] *Rising quickly.*

[7] *Meeting HORATIO C.*

FIRST PLAYER. I warrant your honour.

HAMLET.¹ Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature : for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others.² O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.³

FIRST PLAYER. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

HAMLET. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them ; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered : that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt PLAYERS.*]⁴

[*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work ?

POLONIUS. And the queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit POLONIUS.*] Will you two help to hasten them ?

ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. We will, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

*Enter HORATIO.*⁵

Horatio! ⁶

HORATIO. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET.⁷ Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

HORATIO. O, my dear lord,—

HAMLET. Nay, do not think I flatter ;
For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revénue hast but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee ? [Why should the poor be flatter'd ?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning.] Dost thou hear ?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself ; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks : and blest are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger

To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave,¹ and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee—Something too much of this.—²
There is a play to-night before the king ;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death :
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
[Even with the very comment of thy soul]
Observe mine uncle : if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note ;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming.

HORATIO. Well, my lord :³

[If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.]

HAMLET. They are coming to the play ; I must be idle :
Get you a place.⁴

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter SOLDIERS, KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS,
OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, COURTIER, LORDS,
LADIES and ATTENDANTS.*⁵

KING. How fares our cousin Hamlet ?⁶

HAMLET. Excellent, i' faith ; of the chameleon's dish : I eat the
air, promise-crammed : you cannot feed capons so.

KING. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet ; these words
are not mine.

HAMLET. No, nor mine now. [To POLONIUS.] My lord, you played
once i' the university, you say ?

POLONIUS. That did I, my lord ; and was accounted a good actor.

HAMLET. What did you enact ?

POLONIUS. I did enact Julius Cæsar : I was killed i' the Capitol.
Brutus killed me.

HAMLET. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.
Be the players ready ?

ROSENCRANTZ. Ay, my lord ; they stay upon your patience.

QUEEN. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET. No good mother, here's metal more attractive.⁷

POLONIUS [to the KING]. Oh, ho! do you mark that ?

HAMLET. Lady, shall I lie in your lap ?

[Lying down at OPHELIA's feet.⁸

[OPHELIA. No, my lord.

HAMLET. I mean, my head upon your lap ?

OPHELIA. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. Do you think I meant country matters ?

OPHELIA. I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPHELIA. What is, my lord ?

HAMLET. Nothing.]

OPHELIA. You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET. Who, I ?

OPHELIA. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do

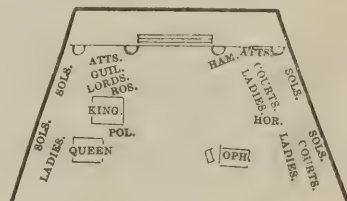
[1] Placing his arm affectionately upon HORATIO'S shoulder.

[2] Withdrawing his arm.

[3] Trumpets sound off L.

[4] He turns up stage to L. arch. HORATIO comes in front of chair L.C. and turns up stage extreme L.

[5] All enter at C. from L., except OPHELIA. SOLDIERS carrying torches descend C. steps and range themselves against walls, R. and L. of stage. As they enter, lights up. The KING leads the QUEEN to her chair, having her on his L. at entrance. LORDS waiting upon the KING follow, with ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, and range themselves above the throne. Several LADIES come down stage to R. and go behind QUEEN'S chair. COURTIER and LORDS follow with other LADIES leading them to seats L.C. ATTENDANTS stand at L. and R. arches. OPHELIA enters from L. and comes down stage L.C. to chair facing the QUEEN. POLONIUS at the same time enters C. and goes to a position R. side of throne. After all are on, curtains at arches are closed. HAMLET then comes to C.



[6] As HAMLET comes C.

[7] He turns to OPHELIA.

[8] Kneeling and resting his left hand on the stool at her feet and looking up at her.

[1] *Looking towards the QUEEN.*

[2] *Drawing back.*

[3] *Curtains at C. arch open.*

[4] *From L. on rostrum, stands C.*

[5] *HAMLET turns to face up stage, without rising.*

[6] *He stretches himself at full length on the ground, facing the throne, his chin in his cupped hands.*

[7] *They enter in the attitude of lovers. PLAYER KING'S arm around the QUEEN. When C. of arch, they stop and the KING faces the QUEEN.*

[8] *Looking up into KING'S face.*

but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks,¹ and my father died within these two hours.

OPHELIA. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET. So long? [Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.] O heavens!² die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then, [or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.

Enter a KING and a QUEEN very lovingly; the QUEEN embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the KING'S ears, and exit. The QUEEN returns; finds the KING dead, and makes passionate action. The POISONER, with some two or three MUTES, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The POISONER wooes the QUEEN with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.

[*Exeunt.*

OPHELIA. What means this, my lord?

HAMLET. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.]

OPHELIA. What is the argument of the play?³

Enter PROLOGUE.⁴

HAMLET. We shall know by this fellow,⁵ [the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

OPHELIA. Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

OPHELIA. You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.]

PROLOGUE. *For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.*

[*Exit.*

HAMLET. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA. 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET. As woman's love.⁶

Enter two PLAYERS, KING and QUEEN.⁷

PLAYER KING. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,
[And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,]
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PLAYER QUEEN.⁸ So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
[That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
For women's fear and love holds quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremity.

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know ;
 And as my love is sized, my fear is so :
 Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ;
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.]

PLAYER KING. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too ;
 My operant powers their functions leave to do :
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
 Honour'd, beloved ; and haply one as kind
 For husband shalt thou—

PLAYER QUEEN. O, confound the rest!
 Such love must needs be treason in my breast :
 In second husband let me be accurst!
 None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET [*aside*]. Wormwood, wormwood.

[PLAYER QUEEN. The instances that second marriage move
 Are base respects of thrift, but none of love :
 A second time I kill my husband dead,
 When second husband kisses me in bed.]

PLAYER KING. I do believe you think what now you speak ;
 But what we do determine oft we break.
 [Purpose it but the slave to memory,
 Of violent birth, but poor validity :
 Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;
 But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
 Most necessary 'tis that we forget
 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :
 What to ourselves in passion we propose,
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
 The violence of either grief or joy
 Their own enactures with themselves destroy :
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
 This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;
 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
 Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
 The great man down, you mark his favourite flies ;
 The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;
 For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
 Directly seasons him his enemy.
 But, orderly to end where I begun,
 Our wills and fates do so contráry run
 That our devices still are overthrown ;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :]
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
 Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
 [To desperation turn my trust and hope!
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
 Meet what I would have well and it destroy.]
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAMLET. If she should break it now! ¹

[1] Looks towards the QUEEN.

[1] *He reclines upon the couch.*

[2] *Stooping over the KING and kissing him.*

[3] R.

[4] *To the QUEEN.*

[5] *Raising himself on his two hands.*

[6] *From L. The KING moves uneasily on his throne.*

[7] *Turning to OPHELIA supporting himself with the R. hand.*

[8] *Turning himself round to face LUCIANUS.*

[9] *Looking about him.*

[10] *Displaying phial which he takes from beneath his robe, holding it up. The KING (CLAUDIUS), who has shown uneasiness as the action proceeds, turns away from the stage, shielding his face.*

[11] *The KING half rises.*

[12] *HAMLET, who has watched the KING with fierce intent, speaks his words with tense rapidity. The KING rises and staggers from the throne. HORATIO comes from his position L. to L.C. behind OPHELIA'S chair.*

[13] *OPHELIA rises.*

[14] *Leaping to his feet.*

[15] *Rising from her chair turns to the KING.*

[16] *Speaking as he goes to C. arch. The curtains fall.*

[17] *Staggers from the foot of throne through the group of LORDS above it, and goes out R. entrance.*

[18] *This call is made by the QUEEN, POLONIUS, LORDS, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, at which SOLDIERS at back of throne follow the KING. LORDS, LADIES and ATTENDANTS on the R. move off quickly R. SOLDIERS on the L. advance at the same time to C., two of them thrust their torches into sconces on the columns. They then with the others exeunt C. OPHELIA crosses behind HAMLET to R. exit. COURTIER, LADIES and ATTENDANTS on the L. go out L. The effect should be of haste and confusion, and must be accomplished rapidly.*

[19] *C. HORATIO L.C. above him. HAMLET speaks through the confusion.*

[20] *Lighting down a little as torches are taken off.*

PLAYER KING. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile ; My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile The tedious day with sleep.¹ [Sleeps.]

PLAYER QUEEN. Sleep rock thy brain ; And never come mischance between us twain!² [Exit.³

HAMLET. Madam, how like you this play ?⁴

QUEEN. The lady protests too much, methinks.

HAMLET. O, but she'll keep her word.

KING. Have you heard the argument ? Is there no offence in 't ?

HAMLET. No, no, they do but jest, [poison in jest ;] no offence i' the world.

KING. What do you call the play ?

HAMLET. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how ? Tropically.⁵ This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna : Gonzago is the duke's name ; his wife, Baptista : you shall see anon ; 'tis a knavish piece of work : but what o' that ? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not : let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter LUCIANUS.⁶

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAMLET.⁷ I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

[OPHELIA. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

OPHELIA. Still better, and worse.

HAMLET. So you must take your husbands.] Begin, murderer ;⁸ leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come : *the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.*

LUCIANUS. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing ; Confederate season, else no creature seeing ;⁹

¹⁰ Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,

With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,

Thy natural magic and dire property,

On wholesome life usurp immediately.¹¹

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.]

HAMLET.¹² He poisons him i' the garden for 's estate. His name's Gonzago : the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian : you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA. The king rises.¹³

HAMLET. What, frightened with false fire !¹⁴

QUEEN. How fares my lord ?¹⁵

POLONIUS. Give o'er the play.¹⁶

KING. Give me some light : away !¹⁷

ALL. Lights, lights, lights !¹⁸

[Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.]

HAMLET.¹⁹ Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalld play ;

For some must watch, while some must sleep :

So runs the world away.²⁰

[Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir ?

HORATIO. Half a share.

HAMLET. A whole one I.]

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself ; and now reigns here
A very, very—peacock.

HORATIO. You might have rhymed.¹

HAMLET. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive ?

HORATIO. Very well, my lord.

HAMLET. Upon the talk of the poisoning ?

HORATIO. I did very well note him.

HAMLET. Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!
For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

[Exit HORATIO.²

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.³

GUILDENSTERN. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET. Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN. The king, sir,—

HAMLET. Ay, sir, what of him ?

GUILDENSTERN. Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

HAMLET. With drink, sir ?

GUILDENSTERN. No, my lord, rather with choler.

[HAMLET. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor ; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

GUILDENSTERN. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAMLET. I am tame, sir : pronounce.]

GUILDENSTERN. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

[HAMLET. You are welcome.

GUILDENSTERN. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment : if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

HAMLET. Sir, I cannot.

GUILDENSTERN. What, my lord ?

HAMLET. Make you a wholesome answer ; my wit's diseased : but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command ; or, rather, as you say, my mother : therefore no more, but to the matter : my mother, you say,—]

ROSENCRANTZ. ⁴ Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

[HAMLET. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration ? Impart.]

ROSENCRANTZ. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

HAMLET. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us ?

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.⁵

ROSENCRANTZ. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper ? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAMLET. Sir, I lack advancement.

[1] *Down stage facing and a little below HAMLET.*

[2] *As he exits C., he throws back the curtains and they remain partly open.*

[3] *From R. entrance, GUILDENSTERN in advance to R.C., down stage, bowing to HAMLET.*

[4] *ROSENCRANTZ speaks as he advances. GUILDENSTERN, R. ROSENCRANTZ, R.C. HAMLET, L.C.*

[5] *Advancing his hands.*

[1] *Turns up C., meeting the PLAYERS, FIRST and SECOND.*

[2] *From R. on rostrum.*

[3] *HAMLET ascends steps and takes recorder from FIRST PLAYER. The PLAYERS remain on rostrum for a moment and then withdraw. As HAMLET is taking the recorder, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN turn to one another and speak apart, R.*

[4] *HAMLET comes to C. of stage.*

[5] *Holding the instrument near GUILDENSTERN.*

[6] *He turns to B.C.*

[7] *From R. on rostrum. HAMLET, turning, speaks to him from L.C. ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN go out R.*

[8] *Remaining on steps. HAMLET goes to him.*

[9] *Pointing out R. from L. of C. arch.*

[10] *Comes down to chair L.C.*

[11] *HAMLET sits.*

[12] *R. on rostrum.*

[13] *Looking towards the R.*

[14] *Rising to C.*

ROSENCRANTZ. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

HAMLET. Ay, but, sir, *While the grass grows*,—the proverb is something musty.¹

Re-enter PLAYERS with recorders.²

O, the recorders!³ let me see one. To withdraw with you:⁴ why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

GUILDENSTERN. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

HAMLET. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

GUILDENSTERN. My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET. I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN. Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET. I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN. I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.⁵

GUILDENSTERN. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAMLET. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.⁶

Enter POLONIUS.⁷

God bless you, sir!

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

POLONIUS. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.⁸

HAMLET. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?⁹

POLONIUS. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

HAMLET. Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIUS. It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET. Or like a whale?

POLONIUS. Very like a whale.

HAMLET. Then I will come to my mother by and by.¹⁰ They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

POLONIUS. I will say so.

HAMLET. By and by is easily said.¹¹

[Exit POLONIUS.¹²

[Leave me, friends.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.¹³

¹⁴ O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever

The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom ;
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural :
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;¹
 [My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites ;
 How in my words soever she be shent,
 To give them seals never, my soul, consent!]

[1] *He goes towards door R. Traverse J. drawn.*

[Exit. *Floats to arranged lighting for Scene II.*



Fig. 5.

SCENE II

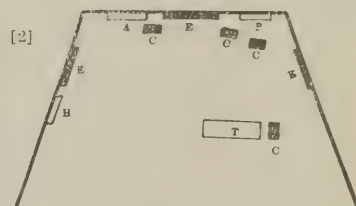
*Another room in the castle.*²

*The KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN discovered.*³

KING. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
 To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you ;
 I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
 And he to England shall along with you :
 [The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunacies.

GUILDENSTERN. We will ourselves provide :
 Most holy and religious fear it is
 To keep those many many bodies safe
 That live and feed upon your majesty.

ROSENCRANTZ. The single and peculiar life is bound,
 With all the strength and armour of the mind,
 To keep itself from noyance ; but much more
 That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty
 Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it with it : it is a massy wheel,
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,



E. Entrances.
 A. Alcove.
 P. Picture of KING CLAUDIUS.
 H. Picture of KING HAMLET.
 C. Chairs.
 T. Table.

NOTE.—The flat should be lowered, or braced in front of rostrum and columns. The prie-dieu in alcove to be set on rostrum between columns R.

[3] *The KING is seated in chair at L. end of table. ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN stand L.C., facing him at the opposite end.*

Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.]

KING. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.¹

[*Enter* POLONIUS.

POLONIUS. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet :
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process ; I'll warrant she'll tax him home ;
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege :
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

KING. Thanks, dear my lord. [*Exit* POLONIUS.]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven ;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder. [Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will :
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent ;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect.]² What if this cursèd hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow ? [Where to serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence ?
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down ?] Then I'll look up ;³
My fault is past. But, O what form of prayer
Can serve my turn ? *Forgive me my foul murder ?*
That cannot be ; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.⁴
[May one be pardon'd and retain the offence ?]
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
[And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law :] but 'tis not so above ;
There is no shuffling, [there the action lies
In his true nature ; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence.]⁵ What then ? what rests ?⁶
Try what repentance can : what can it not ?
Yet what can it when one can not repent ?
O wretched state ! O bosom black as death !
O limèd soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged ! Help, angels !⁷ Make assay !
Bow, stubborn knees ;⁸ and, heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe !⁹
All may be well.¹⁰

[*Retires and kneels.*

Enter HAMLET.¹¹

[1] *They make obeisance to the KING and turn towards entrance R. Bowing again before leaving.*

[2] *Rising.*

[3] *Moving to front of table.*

[4] *Paces to R.C. down stage.*

[5] *Crossing to L. front of table.*

[6] *Pause.*

[7] *Extending his arms above.*

[8] *Turning towards alcove.*

[9] *He enters the alcove.*

[10] *Kneels at the prie-dieu.*

[11] *From L. entrance. He comes slowly to C. above the table. He looks for the QUEEN, and sees the kneeling figure of the KING ; he falls back a pace or two.*

HAMLET.¹ Now might I do it pat, now he is praying!
²And now I'll do 't.³ And so he goes to heaven;
 And so am I revenged.⁴ That would be scann'd:
 A villain kills my father; and for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.

O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
 He took my father grossly, full of bread;
 [With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
 And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
 But in our circumstance and course of thought,
 'Tis heavy with him:] and am I then revenged,
 To take him in the purging of his soul,
 [When he is fit and season'd for his passage?] No!⁵

Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent.
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
 [Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;]
 At gaming, swearing, or about some act
 That has no relish of salvation in 't;⁶
⁷Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
 And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
 As hell, whereto it goes. [My mother stays:
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.]

[Exit.⁸

KING [rising].⁹ My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

[Exit.¹⁰

Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.¹¹

POLONIUS. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:
 Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
 And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
 Much heat and him.¹² I'll silence me e'en here.
 Pray you, be round with him.¹³

HAMLET [within]. Mother, mother, mother!

I'll warrant you,

QUEEN. Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.

[POLONIUS hides behind the arras.

Enter HAMLET.¹⁴

HAMLET. Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN.¹⁵ Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET. Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN.¹⁶ Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET. What's the matter now?

QUEEN. Have you forgot me?

HAMLET. No, by the rood, not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;

And—would it were not so!—you are my mother.

QUEEN. Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.¹⁷

HAMLET.¹⁸ Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
 You go not till I set you up a glass,¹⁹
 Where you may see the inmost part of you.

[1] Speaking beneath his breath.

[2] His hand on his sword, pulling it from the scabbard, he makes a step towards the KING. Getting C.

[3] His thought arrests him.

[4] Turning his face from the KING. Coming down L.

[5] Returning sword to sheath.

[6] Returns to entrance L. Passing up C. to above table.

[7] Speaking at the entrance.

[8] L.

[9] Coming from alcove.

[10] R.

[11] From C. Parting the curtains, which fall to again as POLONIUS, who holds them for the QUEEN to pass, releases them. The QUEEN comes down stage to R. end of table L.C. POLONIUS a little R. of C.

[12] Indicating the arras C.

[13] Going towards arras.

[14] From L. He comes quickly behind table to R.C. facing the QUEEN, a little above her.

[15] Facing him.

[16] Drawing herself up with dignity and anger.

[17] About to make a movement towards C. HAMLET steps in her way.

[18] Seizing her right wrist with his left hand he points across her to the chair L. of table, at the same time pressing her forward to below table.

[19] As HAMLET advances on her the QUEEN retreats, stepping back the length of the table.

[1] HAMLET steps back to R.C.

[2] To the arras.

[3] He stands with left foot advanced on the steps, his back to the R.

[4] Draws the arras aside with left hand.

[5] Lets the arras fall. Sheathes sword.

[6] Coming down C.

[7] The QUEEN sinks into chair L. of table.

[8] Signs to picture L.

[9] To picture R.

[10] Facing R.

[11] Turns in direction of the QUEEN.

[12] Indicating picture of CLAUDIUS, and coming to R. end of table.

[13] Speaking as he leans towards the QUEEN.

QUEEN. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

POLONIUS [*behind*]. What, ho! help, help, help! ¹

HAMLET [*drawing*]. How now! a rat? ² Dead, for a ducat, dead!
[*Makes a pass through the arras.* ³

POLONIUS [*behind*]. O, I am slain!

[*Falls and dies.*

QUEEN. O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET.

Nay, I know not:

Is it the king?

QUEEN. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN. As kill a king!

HAMLET.

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

[*Lifts up the arras and discovers* POLONIUS. ⁴

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger. ⁵

⁶ Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down, ⁷

And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

If damnèd custom have not brass'd it so

That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET.

Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,

Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love

And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows

As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction plucks

The very soul, and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.

QUEEN.

Ay me, what act,

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

HAMLET. Look here, upon this picture, ⁸ and on this, ⁹

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

¹⁰ See, what a grace was seated on this brow;

Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;

A station like the herald Mercury

New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;

A combination and a form indeed,

Where every god did seem to set his seal,

To give the world assurance of a man:

This was your husband. ¹¹ Look you now, what follows:

Here is your husband; ¹² like a mildew'd ear,

Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,

And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes? ¹³

You cannot call it love; for at your age

The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,

And waits upon the judgement : and what judgement
Would step from this to this ? [Sense, sure, you have,
Else could you not have motion ; but sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd ; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was 't
That thus hath cozen'd you 'at hoodman-blind ?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.

O shame ! where is thy blush ?] *Rebellious hell,*¹
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire : [proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn
And reason panders will.]

QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more.²
[Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

HAMLET. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty,—

QUEEN. O, speak to me no more ;]
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears ;
No more, sweet Hamlet !

HAMLET. A murderer and a villain ;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord ; a vice of kings ;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket !

QUEEN. No more !

HAMLET. A king of shreds and patches,—

*Enter GHOST.*³

⁴ Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards ! ⁵ What would your gracious figure ?

QUEEN.⁶ Alas, he's mad !

HAMLET. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command ?
O, say !

GHOST. Do not forget : this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits :
O, step between her and her fighting soul :
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works :
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET. How is it with you, lady ?

QUEEN. Alas, how is 't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse ?

[1] *Drawing back.*

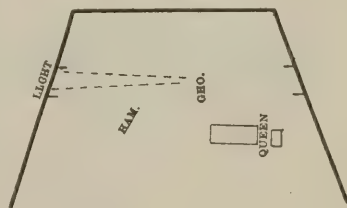
[2] *Shrinking from him, covering her eyes.*

[3] *From L. Passes above table to between the figures of HAMLET and the QUEEN. Light from R. entrance.*

[4] *Slowly retreating backwards to R.C.*

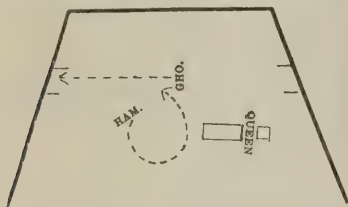
[5] *The GHOST moves clear of table to a little L. of C.*

[6] *Rising, hands on table.*



[1] To GHOST.

[2] GHOST moves across towards R. entrance.



[3] As GHOST moves to R. HAMLET backs down stage and then follows slightly up to position indicated as the GHOST goes out.

[4] R.

[5] The QUEEN moves in front of table to its R. corner, down stage.

[6] HAMLET, from watching the GHOST turns to the QUEEN.

[7] After speaking, the QUEEN goes to behind table facing L.

[8] The QUEEN moves towards entrance L.

[9] The QUEEN pauses near the exit, but does not face HAMLET.

[Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Starts up, and stands on end.] O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look ?

HAMLET. On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable.¹ Do not look upon me ;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects : then what I have to do
Will want true colour ; tears perchance for blood.

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this ?

HAMLET. Did you see nothing there ?

QUEEN. Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET. Nor did you nothing hear ?

QUEEN. No, nothing but ourselves.²

HAMLET.³ Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he lived!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[Exit GHOST.]

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain :⁵
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

HAMLET. Ecstasy!⁶

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music : it is not madness
That I have utter'd : bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word ; which madness
Would gambol from. [Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks :
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen.] Confess yourself to heaven ;
Repent what's past ; avoid what is to come ;
[And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue] ;
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.]

QUEEN. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.⁷

HAMLET. O, throw away the worse part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.

Good night :⁸ but go not to mine uncle's bed ;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.⁹

[That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence : the next more easy ;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either . . . the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency.] Once more, good night :
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,

I'll blessing beg of you.¹ For this same lord,

[*Pointing to* POLONIUS.

I do repent : but heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.²
[I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him.] So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind :
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.
[One word more, good lady.

QUEEN.

What shall I do ?

HAMLET. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do :
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed ;
Pinch wanton on your cheek ; call you his mouse ;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know ;
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide ? who would do so ?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET. I must to England ; you know that ?

QUEEN.

Alack,

I had forgot : 'tis so concluded on.

HAMLET. There's letters seal'd : and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work ;
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar : and't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.
This man shall set me packing :
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.]

³ Mother, good night.⁴ [*Exit* QUEEN.] Indeed this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.⁵
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
[Good night, mother.]

[1] HAMLET goes to the arras and lifts R. side of it, exposing the body of POLONIUS.

[2] He releases the curtain.

[3] After "Mother, good night," the QUEEN looks at HAMLET and passes out L.

[4] Lifts the arras again.

[5] Throwing the arras further back he ascends the steps, passes behind the body, stoops and is lifting it on his last line as curtain falls.

Curtain.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Another room in the castle.¹

Enter KING, attended.²

KING. [I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.]
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him :
He's loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes :
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. [To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause : diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all.]

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.³

How now! what hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

KING.

But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ. Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING. Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ.⁴ Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.⁵

KING. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET. At supper.

KING. At supper! where?

HAMLET. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten : a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet : [we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots : your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table : that's the end.]

KING. Alas, alas!

HAMLET. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING. What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

KING. Where is Polonius?

HAMLET. In heaven ; send hither to see : if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING. Go seek him there.

[To some ATTENDANTS.⁶

HAMLET. He will stay till ye come.

[Exeunt ATTENDANTS.

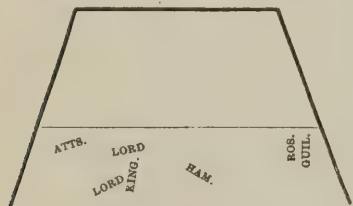
[1] *Traverse J.*

[2] *The KING enters from R., followed by two LORDS, he advances to R.C., turning and addressing them. Several ATTENDANTS enter and stand in group up stage extreme R.*

[3] *From L.*

[4] *Going to the L., calling off.*

[5] *HAMLET enters, followed by GUILDENSTERN ; he comes to C. ROSENCRANTZ, after calling, steps up stage, where he is joined by GUILDENSTERN.*



[6] *The KING turns to ATTENDANTS R. Some of them go out R.*

KING. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness : therefore prepare thyself ;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
[The associates tend,] and every thing is bent
For England.

HAMLET. For England!

KING. Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET. Good.

KING. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET. I see a cherub that sees them. But come ; for England!
Farewell, dear mother.¹

KING. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET.² My mother : father and mother is man and wife ;
man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother. Come, for
England!

[Exit.³

KING.⁴ Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed aboard ;
Delay it not ; I'll have him hence to-night :
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair : pray you, make haste.⁵

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN,
two LORDS and ATTENDANTS.

⁶ And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us—thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,
By letters congruing to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

[Exit.⁷

[1] Going to L.

[2] Pausing and half turning to the KING.

[3] L.

[4] He signs to ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, also to the two LORDS. As he is speaking LORDS cross the stage behind the KING to L.C.

[5] ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN precede the two LORDS at exit L. ATTENDANTS cross at back following.

[6] To R.C.

[7] R. Black out and lift Traverse J. to mask Scene II. At black out there is martial music with drums, low and soft ; this is continued to the opening of Scene II, and carried on as indicated.



Fig. 6.

SCENE II

*A plain in Denmark.*¹

² *Enter* FORTINBRAS, a CAPTAIN, and SOLDIERS, marching.

FORTINBRAS. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king ;
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. [You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye ;
And let him know so.]

CAPTAIN. I will do 't, my lord.³

FORTINBRAS. Go softly on.⁴

[*Exeunt* FORTINBRAS and SOLDIERS.]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others.⁵

HAMLET.⁶ Good sir, whose powers are these ?

CAPTAIN. They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET. How purposed, sir, I pray you ?

CAPTAIN. Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET. Who commands them, sir ?

CAPTAIN. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier ?

CAPTAIN. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it ;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAMLET. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAPTAIN. Yes, it is already garrison'd.

HAMLET. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw :

[1] *Traverse J.*, or tabs, used to mask inset.

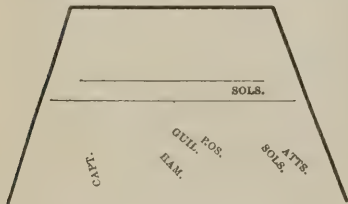
[2] Before the entrance of FORTINBRAS and CAPTAIN, SOLDIERS marching pass between rock-piece and backing, from L. to R. At the entrance of FORTINBRAS he comes from L. to C. CAPTAIN following stands on his right hand. SOLDIERS continue to pass. Then halt as FORTINBRAS speaks. Music ceases at this point.

[3] *Salutes.*

[4] To SOLDIERS, who move again. Music and drums, soft. FORTINBRAS goes out R.

[5] SOLDIERS are still passing with drums and music at HAMLET'S entrance, which is made after a pause.

[6] HAMLET, followed by ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, with several SOLDIERS and ATTENDANTS, enters from L. HAMLET comes C., facing CAPTAIN. Music and drums die away.



This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly, thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN. God be wi' you, sir.¹

[Exit.²

ROSENCRANTZ.

Will 't please you go, my lord?

HAMLET. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.

[Exeunt all except HAMLET.³

How all occasions do inform against me,⁴
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know
Why yet I live to say *This thing's to do*,
⁵ Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do 't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me: ⁶
Witness this army of such mass and charge
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. [Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.] How stand I, then,⁷
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds; [fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain?] O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody,⁸ or be nothing worth!

[Exit.⁹

[1] Salutes.

[2] L.

[3] HAMLET turns up stage, looking off R. in the direction the SOLDIERS have taken. ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN hesitate a moment, confer with one another, and then pass out to R. in front of HAMLET. SOLDIERS and ATTENDANTS follow.

[4] Coming down stage a little.

[5] Moves to his L.

[6] Turns to his R.

[7] L.C.

[8] Going towards R.

[9] R.

*Act drop or tabs.
Floats down until ready.*

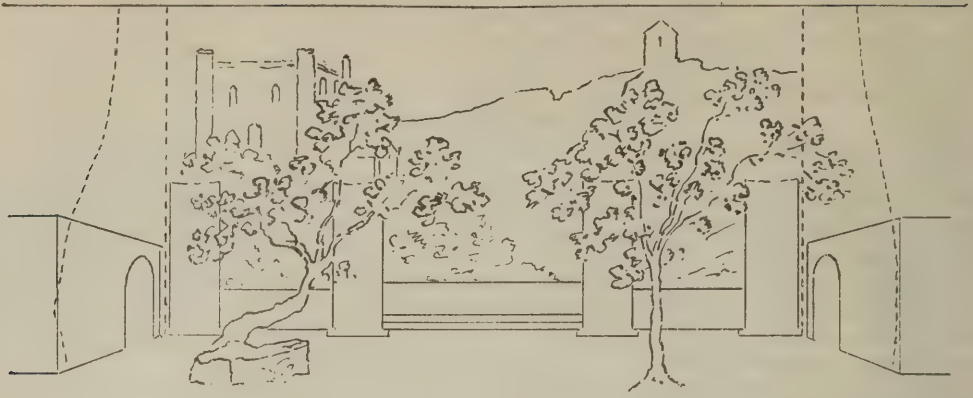


Fig. 7.

SCENE III

Elsinore. The orchard.

*Enter QUEEN and HORATIO.*¹

QUEEN. I will not speak with her.

HORATIO. She is importunate, indeed distract :
Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN. What would she have ?

HORATIO. She speaks much of her father ; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world ; and hems, and beats her heart ;
Spurns enviously at straws ; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense : [her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move
The hearers to collection : they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts ;
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.]
'Twere good she were spoken with ; for she may strew
Dangerous conjecture in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN. Let her come in.

[*Exit HORATIO.*²

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,³
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss :
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

*Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.*⁴

OPHELIA. Where is the beautifullest majesty of Denmark ?⁵

QUEEN. How now, Ophelia !

OPHELIA [*sings*]. *How should I your true love know
From another one ?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.*

[1] From L. The QUEEN comes across stage
to stone R. HORATIO follows, standing
L.C. below tree L.

[2] HORATIO turns on his L. hand and goes
to entrance L.

[3] The QUEEN sits on stone at base of tree
R.

[4] L. OPHELIA first. She comes down
stage in front of tree L. HORATIO
stands by tree L.

[5] C.

QUEEN. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song ?

OPHELIA. Say you ? nay, play you, mark.

[Sings.] *He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.*

QUEEN. Nay, but Ophelia,—

OPHELIA. Pray you, mark.

[Sings.]¹ *White his shroud as the mountain snow.*

*Enter KING.*²

QUEEN. Alas, look here, my lord.³

OPHELIA [sings]. *Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.*

KING. How do you do, pretty lady ?

OPHELIA.⁴ Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

KING. Conceit upon her father.⁵

OPHELIA. Pray you, let's have no words of this ; but when they ask you what it means, say you this :

[Sings.] *To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber-door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*⁶

KING. Pretty Ophelia!

OPHELIA. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on 't : ⁷

[(Sings.) *By Gis and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock, they are to blame.
Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed.
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*]

KING. How long hath she been thus ? ⁸

OPHELIA. I hope all will be well. We must be patient : but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it : ⁹ and so I thank you for your good counsel.¹⁰ Come, my coach ! ¹¹ Good night, ladies : ¹² good night, sweet ladies ; good night, good night.

[Exit.¹³

KING. Follow her close : give her good watch, I pray you.

[Exit HORATIO.¹⁴

¹⁵ O, this is the poison of deep grief ; it springs All from her father's death.¹⁶ O Gertrude, Gertrude, When sorrows come, they come not single spies, But in battalions. [A noise within.]¹⁷ [First, her father slain : Next, your son gone ; and he most violent author Of his own just remove : the people muddled, Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers

[1] To down stage L.

[2] From L. on rostrum. He comes down C.

[3] Rising and meeting the KING. KING and QUEEN stand at L. corner of stone.

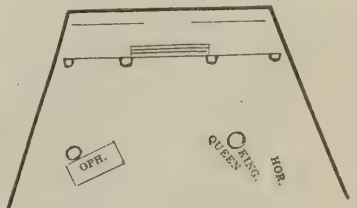
[4] Turning to face the KING.

[5] Aside to the QUEEN. OPHELIA, as she speaks, comes to C.

[6] Crossing in front to R.C. The KING and QUEEN work round as she does so to C.

[7] Sits on stone.

[8] Appealing to the QUEEN and also to HORATIO. KING, QUEEN and HORATIO L.C.



[9] Rising.

[10] To group L.C.

[11] Turns up stage to R.

[12] Turning back.

[13] R. up stage behind tree.

[14] HORATIO crosses in front of KING and QUEEN and follows OPHELIA out R.

[15] The KING crosses to C.

[16] Turning to the QUEEN.

[17] From R. at back. Many angry voices, as of a mob. The voices rise and fall, but must be kept subdued. They continue until the entrance of LAERTES.

[1] *Noise continued.*

[2] *From R. on rostrum. The KING going a little down R.C., turns to face MARCELLUS, who comes down C. to between trees.*

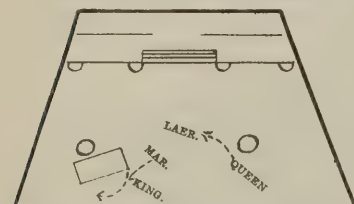
[3] *Voices again swell up.*

[4] *With drawn sword. He comes from R. on rostrum.*

[5] *Speaking to the mob off R.*

[6] *Seeing the KING and advancing upon him.*

[7] *LAERTES down C. MARCELLUS steps back to the side of the KING, on his left hand, as if to protect him; the KING places his hand on MARCELLUS'S shoulders and steps in front of him. MARCELLUS then falls to a position R.*



[8] *The QUEEN advances to LAERTES and lays her hands upon him restrainingly.*

[9] *The QUEEN hesitates.*

[10] *The QUEEN releases LAERTES.*

For good Polonius' death, and we have done but greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death.]

QUEEN.

Alack, what noise is this?¹

KING. [Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.]

*Enter MARCELLUS.*²

What is the matter?

MARCELLUS.

Save yourself, my lord:

[The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,]
The young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
[Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,]
They cry *Choose we: Laertes shall be king!*
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds:
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

QUEEN. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

[KING. The doors are broke.]

*[Noise within.]*³

*Enter LAERTES.*⁴

LAERTES. Where is this king? ⁵ Sirs, stand you all without.

DANES [off]. No, let's come in.

LAERTES.

I pray you, give me leave.

DANES [off]. We will, we will.

LAERTES. I thank you: keep the door.⁶ O thou vile king,
Give me my father!⁷

QUEEN.

Calmly, good Laertes.⁸

LAERTES. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,
[Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirch'd brow
Of my true mother.]

KING.

What is the cause, Laertes,

That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

Let him go, Gertrude;⁹ do not fear our person:

There's such divinity doth hedge a king,

That treason can but peep to what it would,

Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,

Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.¹⁰

Speak, man.

LAERTES. Where is my father? ¹

KING. Dead.

QUEEN. But not by him.

KING. Let him demand his fill.

LAERTES. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!

I dare damnation. To this point I stand,

That both the worlds I give to negligence,

Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged

Most thoroughly for my father.

KING. Who shall stay you?

LAERTES. My will, not all the world:

And for my means, I'll husband them so well,

They shall go far with little.

KING. Good Laertes,

[If you desire to know the certainty

Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge,

That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,

Winner and loser?

LAERTES. None but his enemies.

KING. Will you know them then?

LAERTES. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;

And like the kind life-rendering pelican,

Repast them with my blood.

KING. Why, now you speak

Like a good child and a true gentleman.]

That I am guiltless of your father's death,

And am most sensible in grief for it,

It shall as level to your judgement pierce

As day does to your eye.

[DANES. [Within.] Let her come in.

LAERTES. How now! what noise is that?]

*Re-enter OPHELIA.*²

[O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,

Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!

By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,

Till our scale turn the beam.] O rose of May!

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits

Should be as mortal as an old man's life?

[Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,

It sends some precious instance of itself

After the thing it loves.]

OPHELIA [*sings*].³

They bore him barefaced on the bier;

Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;

And in his grave rain'd many a tear:—

Fare you well, my dove!

LAERTES. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,

It could not move thus.

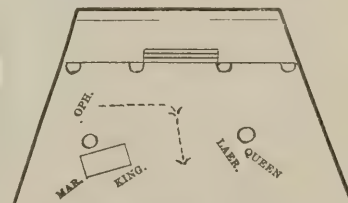
OPHELIA [*sings*]. You must sing, *A-down a-down,*

An you call him a-down-a.

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

[1] *Advancing.*

[2] *From B. carrying herbs and flowers.* She advances to C. up stage and gets down stage as she finishes her song. All fall back as OPHELIA comes C., but LAERTES, who sheathes his sword as he speaks and goes to greet her, at "O heavens!" retires to position near the QUEEN.*



[3] *Coming down stage.*

* This scene has been most beautifully played with empty hands.

[1] *To LAERTES.*

[2] *OPHELIA passes in front of LAERTES to the QUEEN.*

[3] *To the QUEEN.*

[4] *Crosses to the KING.*

[5] *Turns on her left hand and goes up stage C. between trees.*

[6] *Facing down stage.*

[7] *Comes in front of KING and MARCELLUS to R.C.*

[8] *R. Down stage.*

[9] *Breaking down.*

[10] *The KING comes C. As he does so the QUEEN passes up on the L. and round to C. up stage. After she has moved to this position she signs to MARCELLUS and he goes up to her R.C. They speak and go out R.*

[11] *Coming closer to LAERTES.*

[12] *LAERTES draws back from the KING at his revelation.*

[13] *From C. He comes down stage on the KING'S R. hand and kneels, presenting his dispatch.*

LAERTES. This nothing's more than matter.

OPHELIA.¹ There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.²

LAERTES. A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPHELIA. There's fennel for you, and columbines:^{3 4} there's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb-grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end,—

[Sings.] *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*⁵

LAERTES. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself, She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPHELIA [sings].

*And will he not come again?*⁶

And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead:

Go to thy death-bed:

*He never will come again.*⁷

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan:

God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

[Exit.⁸

LAERTES. Do you see this, O God?⁹

KING.¹⁰ Laertes, I must commune with your grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,

And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:

If by direct or by collateral hand

They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,

To you in satisfaction; but if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

And we shall jointly labour with your soul

To give it due content.

LAERTES. Let this be so;

His means of death, his obscure funeral—

[No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,

No noble rite nor formal ostentation—]

Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,

That I must call't in question.

KING. So you shall;¹¹

And where the offence is let the great axe fall.

Hamlet, that hath your noble father slain,

Persued my life.¹²

*Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,

And you must put me in your heart for friend.

[I pray you, go with me.]

*Enter a MESSENGER.*¹³

How now! what news?

* The early part of Scene VII, Act IV (full text), being omitted, these two lines are placed here.

MESSENGER.

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :

[This to your majesty : this to the queen.]

KING. From Hamlet! who brought them ? ¹MESSENGER. Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them not : ²[They were given me by Claudio ; he received them
Of him that brought them.]

KING.

Laertes, you shall hear them.

Leave us.

[Exit MESSENGER. ³

[Reads.] High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on
your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes :
when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion
of my sudden and more strange return.

HAMLET.

What should this mean ? Are all the rest come back ?

[Or is it some abuse, and no such thing ?]

LAERTES. Know you the hand ?

KING.

'Tis Hamlet's character. [Naked !

And in a postscript here, he says *alone*.]Can you advise me ? ⁴LAERTES. I'm lost in it, my lord. ⁵ But let him come ;

It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus didest thou.

KING.

[If it be so, Laertes—

As how should it be so ? how otherwise ?—]

Will you be ruled by me ? ⁶

LAERTES.

Ay, my lord ;

⁷ So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

KING. To thine own peace. [If he be now return'd,

As checking at his voyage, and that he means

No more to undertake it,] I will work him ⁸

To an exploit, now ripe in my device,

Under the which he shall not choose but fall :

⁹ And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,

But even his mother shall uncharge the practice

And call it accident. ¹⁰

LAERTES.

¹¹ My lord, I will be ruled :

The rather, if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ.

KING.

[It falls right.

You have been talk'd of since your travel much,

And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality

Wherein, they say, you shine : your sum of parts

Did not together pluck such envy from him

As did that one, and that, in my regard,

Of the unworhiest siege.

LAERTES.

What part is that, my lord ?

KING. A very riband in the cap of youth,

Yet needful too ; for youth no less becomes

The light and careless livery that it wears

Than settled age his sables and his weeds,

Importing health and graveness.] Two months since,

Here was a gentleman of Normandy :—

[I've seen myself, and served against, the French,

And they can well on horseback : but this gallant

Had witchcraft in 't ; he grew unto his seat ;

[1] Taking letters.

[2] Rising.

[3] c. The KING breaks the seal, turning a little R.

[4] Looking up from letter to LAERTES.

[5] Going up stage to R. of tree L.C.

[6] Going up c. to a little above LAERTES in speaking to him.

[7] Crossing to stone seat in front of the KING.

[8] Coming behind LAERTES and lowering his voice.

[9] Looking round before speaking in LAERTES'S ear.

[10] Draws back a little, still looking questioningly at LAERTES.

[11] LAERTES raises his face to the KING.

And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast : so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

LAERTES. A Norman was 't ?

KING. A Norman.

LAERTES. Upon my life, Lamond.

KING. The very same.

LAERTES. I know him well : he is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.]

KING. He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence
And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you : [the scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them.] Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.

¹ Now, out of this,—

LAERTES. What out of this, my lord ?

KING.² Laertes, was your father dear to you ?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart ?

LAERTES. Why ask you this ?

KING. [Not that I think you did not love your father ;
But that I know love is begun by time ;
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it ;
And nothing is at a like goodness still ;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too much : that we would do,
We should do when we would ; for this *would* changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents ;
And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer :—]
Hamlet comes back : what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words ?

LAERTES. To cut his throat i' the church.

KING. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize ;
[Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home :]
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
[And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you ;] bring you in fine together
And wager on your heads : he, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose

[1] Taking LAERTES by the arm.

[2] Bending close.

A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

LAERTES.

I will do 't :

And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal : [I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.]

KING.

Let's further think of this ;

[Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape : if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof.] Soft ! let me see.¹
We'll make a solemn wager on your connings :
I ha't :²

When in your motion you are hot and dry—
[As make your bouts more violent to that end—]
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

*Enter QUEEN.*³

How now, sweet queen !

QUEEN.⁴ One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow : your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAERTES. Drown'd ! O, where ?⁵

QUEEN. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream ;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
[That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them :]
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke ;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide ;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up :
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes :
[As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element : but long it could not be]
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.⁶

LAERTES. Alas, then, she is drown'd ?

QUEEN. Drown'd, drown'd.

LAERTES. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears :⁷ but yet
It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will : when these are gone,

[1] *To C., thinking.*

[2] *The KING turns and motions to LAERTES, who goes to him. The KING rests his hand on LAERTES'S arm.*

[3] *R. The KING, perceiving her, draws back L.C.*

[4] *Coming to C. between the two trees.*

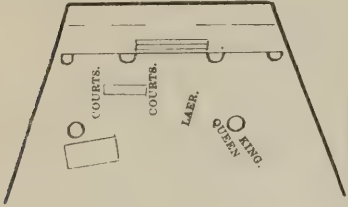
[5] *Stepping back.*

[6] *To L.C. above the KING.*

[7] *Overcome by his grief he puts his hands to his face.*

[1] Up C. Turns to the KING.

[2] He is about to go R. when he sees the bier approaching; as it comes to R.C. up stage he kneels.



The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord : ¹
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it.²

Enter COURTIERs R., carrying OPHELIA on a bier.

[KING. Let's follow, Gertrude :
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again ;
Therefore let's follow.]

Curtain.



Fig. 8.

ACT THE FIFTH

SCENE I

*A churchyard.¹**Two CLOWNS discovered with spades, etc.*

² FIRST CLOWN. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

³ SECOND CLOWN. I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

SECOND CLOWN. Why, 'tis found so.

FIRST CLOWN. It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

SECOND CLOWN. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

FIRST CLOWN. Give me leave.⁴ Here lies the water; good:⁵ here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water,⁶ and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,—mark you that;⁷ but if the water⁸ come to him and drown him,⁹ he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

SECOND CLOWN. But is this law?

FIRST CLOWN. Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

SECOND CLOWN. Will you ha' the truth on't?¹⁰ If this had not

NOTE.—Strained efforts to obtain laughter by practical business in the playing of the two gravediggers should be avoided.

[1] *Tab*—or *Traverse J.*, used to mask inset scene.

[2] *Standing in grave, leaning on his pick.*

[3] *Standing L. of grave.*

[4] *He gets out of grave and comes round the L. of it, laying his pick on the ground below it L.C.*

[5] *Going to R. and taking up a position facing L.*

[6] *Slowly approaching the pick L.C.*

[7] *Sententiously shaking his finger at SECOND CLOWN.*

[8] *Taking up the pick and carrying it to his former position R.*

[9] *Turning to face SECOND CLOWN.*

[10] *Advancing to FIRST CLOWN.*

[1] *Scratching his head.*

[2] SECOND CLOWN *picks up spade from L. of grave and gives it to FIRST CLOWN.*

[3] *Both c.*

[4] *Patting SECOND CLOWN on back.*

[5] *Rubbing his forehead.*

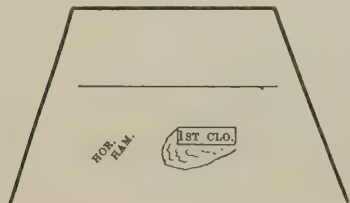
[6] *Suddenly.*

[7] *From R. They stand watching the CLOWNS.*

[8] *Comes round grave L. end, gets into it and works.*

[9] *L.*

[10] *Patting it with spade to prevent it rolling from the mound.*



been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

FIRST CLOWN. Why, there thou say'st : ¹ and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade.² There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers : they hold up Adam's profession.

SECOND CLOWN. Was he a gentleman ?

FIRST CLOWN. He was the first that ever bore arms.

SECOND CLOWN. Why, he had none.

FIRST CLOWN. What, art a heathen ? How dost thou understand the Scripture ? The Scripture says *Adam digged* : could he dig without arms ? ³ I'll put another question to thee : if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

SECOND CLOWN. Go to.

FIRST CLOWN. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter ?

SECOND CLOWN. The gallows-maker ; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

FIRST CLOWN. I like thy wit well, in good faith : ⁴ the gallows does well ; but how does it well ? it does well to those that do ill : now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church : argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

SECOND CLOWN.⁵ *Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter ?*

FIRST CLOWN. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

SECOND CLOWN. Marry, now I can tell.⁶

FIRST CLOWN. To 't.

SECOND CLOWN. Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.⁷

FIRST CLOWN. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating ; and when you are asked this question next, say a *grave-maker* : the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Vaughan : fetch me a stoup of liquor.⁸

[Exit SECOND CLOWN.⁹

[He digs and sings.

In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,

O, methought, there was nothing meet-a.

HAMLET. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making ?

HORATIO. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAMLET. 'Tis e'en so : the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

FIRST CLOWN *[sings].*

But age, with his stealing steps,

Hath claw'd me in his clutch,

And hath shipped me intil the land,

As if I had never been such.

[Throws up a skull.¹

HAMLET. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once : how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone,

that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches ; one that would circumvent God, might it not ?

HORATIO. It might, my lord.

[HAMLET. Or of a courtier ; which could say *Good morrow, sweet lord ! How dost thou, good lord ?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it ; might it not ?

HORATIO. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, e'en so : and now my Lady Worm's ; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade : here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em ? mine ache to think on 't.]

FIRST CLOWN [*sings*].

*A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade
For and a shrouding sheet :
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[*Throws up another skull.*

HAMLET. There's another : why may not that be the skull of a lawyer ? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks ? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the scone with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery ? [Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries : is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt ? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures ? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box ; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha ?

HORATIO. Not a jot more, my lord.

HAMLET. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins ?

HORATIO. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

HAMLET. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that.] I will speak to this fellow.¹ Whose grave's this, sirrah ?²

FIRST CLOWN. Mine, sir.³

[(*Sings*). *O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*]

HAMLET. I think it be thine, indeed ; for thou liest in 't.

FIRST CLOWN.⁴ You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore it is not yours : for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.⁵

HAMLET. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine : 'tis for the dead, not for the quick ; therefore thou liest.

FIRST CLOWN.⁶ 'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again, from me to you.

HAMLET. What man dost thou dig it for ?⁷

FIRST CLOWN. For no man, sir.

HAMLET. What woman, then ?

FIRST CLOWN. For none, neither.

HAMLET. Who is to be buried in 't ?

FIRST CLOWN. One that was a woman, sir ; but, rest her soul, she's dead.⁸

HAMLET.⁹ How absolute the knave is ! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. [By the Lord, Horatio, these three

[1] *Going to the R. end of grave.*

[2] FIRST CLOWN pauses in his work and looks up at HAMLET, answering quickly. HORATIO to HAMLET'S R.

[3] *After speaking resumes digging.*

[4] *Looking up again.*

[5] *Throws out a spade of earth.*

[6] *Waving his hand towards HAMLET.*

[7] FIRST CLOWN pauses, resting on his spade.

[8] *Resumes work.*

[9] *Turning to HORATIO.*

[1] *Resting his L. foot on the mound of earth and leaning on his knee.*

[2] *Pausing in his work and wiping his forehead with his arm.*

[3] *Makes to dig again.*

[4] *Leaning on his spade's handle.*

[5] *Very sententially.*

[6] *With enjoyment of his own humour.*

[7] *Leaning on the edge of the grave—his hand in contact with the skull.*

[8] *Picks up the skull.*

[9] *Holding the skull to face him.*

[10] *Shaking his head at the skull.*

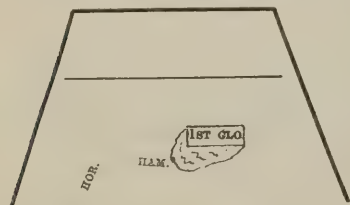
[11] *Looking up at HAMLET.*

[12] *Half straightening himself.*

[13] *Smacking the skull with the palm of his hand.*

[14] *Leaning forward again, his hands outstretched.*

[15] *After he has taken the skull he turns a little to R., HORATIO then moves so as to be further R. and below him.*



[16] *Pause.*

[17] *Looks from the skull to HORATIO.*

[18] *Approaching HAMLET.*

[19] *He turns on his L., goes to his former position and hands the skull to FIRST CLOWN.*

years I have taken a note of it ; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.] How long hast thou been a grave-making ?¹

FIRST CLOWN.² Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

HAMLET. How long is that since ?

FIRST CLOWN. Cannot you tell that ? every fool can tell that : it was the very day that young Hamlet was born ; he that is mad, and sent into England.³

HAMLET. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

FIRST CLOWN.⁴ Why, because he was mad : he shall recover his wits there ; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

HAMLET. Why ?

FIRST CLOWN. 'Twill not be seen in him there ; there the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET. How came he mad ?

FIRST CLOWN. Very strangely, they say.⁵

HAMLET. How strangely ?

FIRST CLOWN. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.⁶

HAMLET. Upon what ground ?

FIRST CLOWN. Why, here in Denmark : I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAMLET. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot ?

FIRST CLOWN. I' faith, [if he be not rotten before he die—as we have many pocky corsers now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in]—he will last you some eight year or nine year : a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET. Why he more than another ?

FIRST CLOWN.⁷ Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while ; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body.⁸ Here's a skull now ; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.⁹

HAMLET. Whose was it ?

FIRST CLOWN. A whoreson mad fellow's it was :¹⁰ ¹¹ whose do you think it was ?

HAMLET. Nay, I know not.

FIRST CLOWN. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue ; a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

HAMLET. This ?¹²

FIRST CLOWN. E'en that.¹³

HAMLET. Let me see.¹⁴ [*Takes the skull.*]¹⁵ Alas, poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio : a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy : he hath borne me on his back a thousand times ; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is ! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now ? your gambols ? your songs ? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar ? Not one now, to mock your own grinning ? quite chap-fallen ? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come ; make her laugh at that.¹⁶ ¹⁷ Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO. What's that, my lord ?¹⁸

HAMLET. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth ?

HORATIO. E'en so.

HAMLET. And smelt so ? pah.¹⁹

HORATIO. E'en so, my lord.

HAMLET.¹ To what base uses we may return, Horatio! [Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

HORATIO. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAMLET. No, faith not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?]

Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!²

But soft! but soft! aside:³ here comes the king.⁴

Enter PRIESTS, etc., in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and MOURNERS following; KING, QUEEN, their trains, etc.

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?
And with such maim'd rights? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile, and mark.

[Retiring with HORATIO.⁵

LAERTES.⁶ What ceremony else?

HAMLET.

That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: mark.

LAERTES. What ceremony else?

FIRST PRIEST. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
[Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her:]
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

LAERTES. Must there no more be done?

FIRST PRIEST.

No more be done:

We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

LAERTES. Lay her i' the earth:⁷

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.⁸

HAMLET.

What, the fair Ophelia!

QUEEN. Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

[Scattering flowers.

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAERTES.

O treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that curs'd head,

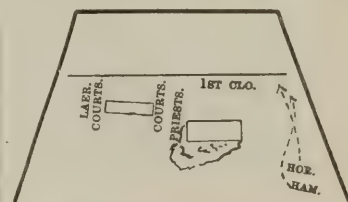
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense

[1] Returning to HORATIO.

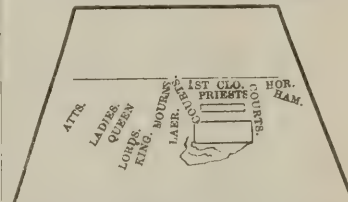
[2] Seeing the approach of procession over HORATIO'S left shoulder.

[3] He takes HORATIO'S left arm, and leads him to extreme L., turning to face R. HAMLET down stage.

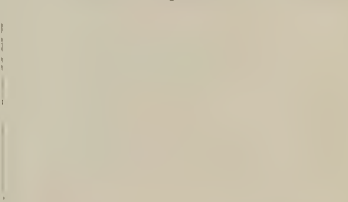
[4] FIRST CLOWN gets from the grave and stands back L.C. Bell tolls.



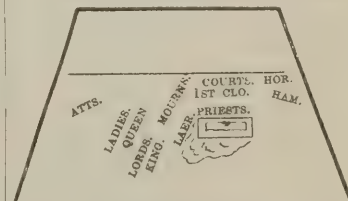
[5] Going up stage L. with HORATIO. As the procession appears, FIRST CLOWN passes to back and remains behind PRIESTS.



[6] Before LAERTES speaks COURTIER'S lower the bier to the ground. The bell ceases.



[7] COURTIER'S lower the bier into grave, and retire up, standing behind the PRIESTS.



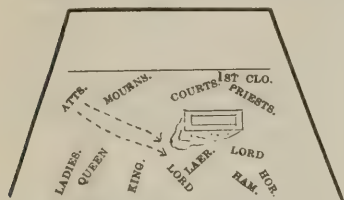
[8] The QUEEN having taken flowers from one of the LADIES approaches the grave to a position between LAERTES and PRIESTS.

[1] *The figure of FIRST CLOWN is seen above the grave to L. of the PRIESTS. LAERTES waves him back, coming round front of graves to L. end. The QUEEN steps back as LAERTES climbs into grave.*

[2] *Coming down stage to below grave L.C.*

[3] *Turns to HAMLET and then leaps from the grave, advances to him and seizes him by the throat. The QUEEN shrinks away to her LADIES who, with her, form group down stage R. The KING down stage R.C. ATTENDANTS and LORDS advance to C.*

[4] *A LORD goes to LAERTES and takes his right arm, restraining him and drawing him away. HORATIO comes down on HAMLET'S L., and does the same with him.*



[5] *The LORD on LAERTES' R. steps back up stage as the KING advances to same position on LAERTES' R.*

[6] *On LAERTES' right hand.*

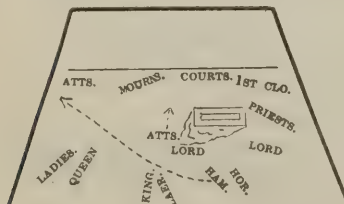
[7] *QUEEN to R.C.*

[8] *Advancing on LAERTES, who with the KING falls back a pace or two. The QUEEN again to her LADIES. HAMLET remains C.*

[9] *Turns to HORATIO who has followed him.*

[10] *Passes R. above the KING and LAERTES, who make way. ATTENDANTS stand back R.*

[11] *R.*



[12] *HORATIO follows HAMLET R.*

Deprived thee of! ¹ Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms :

[Leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

HAMLET ² *[advancing]*. What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Cónjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

LAERTES.

The devil take thy soul! ³

[Grappling with him.]

HAMLET. Thou pray'st not well.

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat ;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wiseness fear : hold off thy hand.

KING. Pluck them asunder. ⁴

QUEEN.

Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL. Gentlemen,—

HORATIO.

Good my lord, be quiet.

HAMLET. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

QUEEN. O my son, what theme?

HAMLET. I loved Ophelia : forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her? ⁵

KING. O, he is mad, Laertes. ⁶

QUEEN. For love of God, forbear him. ⁷

HAMLET. 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do : ⁸

Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?

Woo't drink up Esill? eat a crocodile?

I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us, till our ground

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, and thou'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou. ⁹

QUEEN.

This is mere madness :

And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;

Anon, as patient as the female dove,

When that her golden couplets are disclosed,

His silence will sit drooping.

HAMLET.

Hear you, sir ;

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I loved you ever : but it is no matter ;

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew and dog will have his day. ¹⁰

[Exit. ¹¹

KING. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[Exit HORATIO. ¹²

[To LAERTES.] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech ;
We'll put the matter to the present push.

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.¹
 This grave shall have a living monument :
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be.²

SCENE II³

*A room in the castle. Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.*⁴

HAMLET. But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 That to Laertes I forgot myself ;
 [For, by the image of my cause, I see
 The portraiture of his : I'll court his favours :]
 But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
 Into a towering passion.

HORATIO.

Peace! who comes here?

*Enter OSRIC.*⁵

OSRIC.⁶ Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET.⁷ I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

HORATIO. No, my good lord.

HAMLET. Thy state is the more gracious ; [for 'tis a vice to know
 him. He hath much land, and fertile : let a beast be lord of beasts,
 and his crib shall stand at the king's mess : 'tis a chough ; but,
 as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.]

OSRIC.⁸ Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should
 impart a thing to you from his majesty.

HAMLET. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put
 your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

OSRIC. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

HAMLET. No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

OSRIC.⁹ It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

HAMLET. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my com-
 plexion.

OSRIC. Exceedingly, my lord ; it is very sultry,—¹⁰ as 'twere,—I
 cannot tell how.¹¹ But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you
 that he has laid a great wager on your head : sir, this is the matter,—¹²

HAMLET. I beseech you, remember—

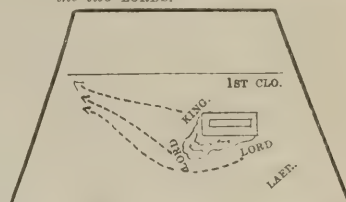
[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.

OSRIC. Nay, good lord ; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here
 is newly come to court Laertes ; believe me, an absolute gentleman,
 full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great show-
 ing : indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of
 gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman
 would see.

[HAMLET. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you ; though,
 I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of
 memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in
 the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article ; and
 his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of
 him, his semblable is his mirror ; and who else would trace him, his
 umbrage, nothing more.

OSRIC. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

- [1] Turning to the QUEEN, who then turns up stage and goes out R. followed by her LADIES, ATTENDANTS, MOURNERS and COURTIERS. The PRIESTS exeunt L. There is a pause until they have gone. LAERTES moves to the L. The KING then goes to head of grave.
 [2] He turns to R. and goes out followed by the two LORDS.



When the KING and the LORDS have gone, LAERTES goes to the foot of the grave, and kneeling buries his face in his hands.

The GRAVEDIGGER stands reverently watching ; a dim and motionless figure.

- [3] Traverse J.

- [4] HAMLET enters R. leaning on HORATIO, he is above HORATIO on his L. hand. They advance to R.C. before HAMLET speaks.

- [5] From L. Stands L.C.

- [6] With an elaborate bow he removes his hat, making a sweeping gesture with it.

- [7] Still leaning on HORATIO'S shoulder.

- [8] With another elaborate bow, and advancing a step.

- [9] A slight confusion causes him to turn a little L.

- [10] He fans himself with his hat.

- [11] Approaching to C.

- [12] Another bow.

HAMLET. The concernancy, sir ? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath ?

OSRIC. Sir ?

HORATIO. Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue ? You will do 't, sir, really.]

HAMLET. What imports the nomination of this gentleman ?

OSRIC. Of Laertes ?

[HORATIO. His purse is empty already ; all 's golden words are spent.]

HAMLET. Of him, sir.

[OSRIC. I know you are not ignorant.

HAMLET. I would you did, sir ; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir ?]

OSRIC. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

[HAMLET. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence ; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.]

OSRIC. I mean, sir, for his weapon ; [but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he 's unfellowed.]

HAMLET. What 's his weapon ?

OSRIC. Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET. That 's two of his weapons : but, well.

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses : against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so : three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAMLET. What call you the carriages ?

[HORATIO. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.]

OSRIC. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

[HAMLET. The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides : I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages ; that 's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this *imponed*, as you call it ?]

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits : he hath laid on twelve for nine ; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.¹

HAMLET. How if I answer *no* ?

OSRIC. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAMLET. Sir, I will walk here in the hall : if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me ; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so ?

HAMLET. To this effect, sir ; after what flourish your nature will.²

OSRIC. I commend my duty to your lordship.³

HAMLET. Yours, yours. [Exit OSRIC.⁴] [He does well to commend it himself ; there are no tongues else for 's turn.

HORATIO. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET. He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter ; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through

[1] *Bowing again.*

[2] *With another bow, OSRIC goes L.*

[3] *Bowing at the exit. HAMLET in making acknowledgment comes C.*

[4] *L.*

the most fond and winnowed opinions ; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a LORD L.

LORD. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall : he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAMLET. I am constant to my purposes ; they follow the king's pleasure : if his fitness speaks, mine is ready ; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

LORD. The king and queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET. In happy time.

LORD. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET. She well instructs me.

[Exit LORD.]

HORATIO. You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAMLET.¹ I do not think so ; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice ; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart : but it is no matter.

HORATIO.² Nay, good my lord,—

HAMLET. It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it : I will forestal their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

HAMLET.³ Not a whit, we defy augury : there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ;⁴ if it be not come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come : the readiness is all : since no man has aught of what he leaves what is't to leave betimes ?

*[Exeunt.]*⁵

SCENE III

A room of state in the castle.

*The KING and QUEEN, LAERTES, OSRIC, LORDS, COURTIER, LADIES, OFFICERS, and ATTENDANTS are discovered.*⁶

KING.⁷ Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.⁸

[The KING puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET'S.]

HAMLET. Give me your pardon, sir : I've done you wrong ; But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

[This presence knows, And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd With sore distraction. What I have done, That might your nature, honour and exception Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness. Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes ? Never Hamlet : If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away, And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes, Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it. Who does it, then ? His madness : if't be so,

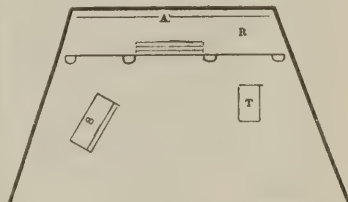
[1] Turns to HORATIO, keeping C.

[2] Going towards HAMLET.

[3] Placing both his hands on HORATIO'S shoulders, and then slipping his right arm about HORATIO'S neck, he leads him as he speaks to L.C.

[4] Stopping L.C.

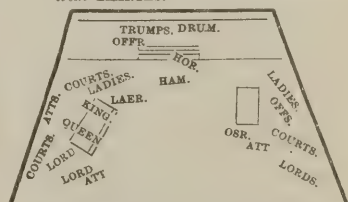
[5] He goes out L. with HORATIO, his arm still about him. Open Traverse J.



A. Castle cloth. R. Rostrum. T. Table. S. Double seat for KING and QUEEN on dais, with shallow step.

[6] HAMLET, followed by HORATIO, enters a moment after the curtain has risen.

[7] Before the KING speaks and until HAMLET appears, there should be animation—and the voices of LORDS, LADIES and COURTIER. The KING is conversing with LAERTES.



[8] The KING rises as he speaks, and steps from the throne ; passing in front of LAERTES he approaches HAMLET, who comes down C., until on a level with the KING'S seat. The KING turning to LAERTES draws him forward.

LAERTES, KING, HAMLET,
R. R.C. C.

[1] *The KING goes, behind LAERTES towards his throne.*

[2] *The KING sits. LAERTES' and HAMLET'S hands part.*

[3] *HAMLET down stage a little towards L.C.*

[4] *Advancing down stage R.C. OSRIC turns to ATTENDANT at his side and takes the foils the man is holding. Taking them by the blades so as to present the handles.*

[5] *OSRIC advances and presents the foils to HAMLET, who takes one and tries it. Stepping back, HAMLET turns and speaks to HORATIO, who has come to R. of table L. At the same moment OSRIC crosses to C., meeting LAERTES, who takes a foil from him. OSRIC bows elaborately, stepping back L. so as to clear the figures of HAMLET and HORATIO. LAERTES tries the foil to R.C., getting with a purpose just above ATTENDANT, who is holding foils below LORDS at the QUEEN'S right hand. The KING must time speaking to HAMLET until LAERTES has gained this position—*

KING.	LAERTES.	HORATIO.
QUEEN.		HAMLET L.C.
LORDS.		
ATTENDANT,		
R.C.		

[6] *OSRIC advances with foils to C., but stops and returns, bowing, as he sees LAERTES exchange his foil for one held by the ATTENDANT on his R. LAERTES should evince some haste in this action. He takes the poisoned foil. As soon as the exchange is made the ATTENDANT goes up stage in front of throne and crosses at back to up L., above table.*

[7] *OSRIC approaches HAMLET, making offer of another selection, HAMLET refusing.*

[8] *HAMLET, as he speaks, comes down L.C. LAERTES is R.C. They face one another.*

[9] *OSRIC retires to lower end of table L. and returns foils to ATTENDANT, from whom he took them.*

[10] *The KING rises.*

[11] *Indicating table L.*

[12] *To the OFFICER on rostrum.*

[13] *OFFICER goes out R. KING sits.*

[14] *OSRIC to C. above HAMLET and LAERTES and between them. LORDS below throne and those down stage L. move up a pace keenly watching the bout.*

NOTE.—The actual play in the bouts should be directed by an expert, who must arrange that the positions of the characters (HAMLET and LAERTES) are as indicated at their conclusions. A producer throughout this scene must bear in mind the necessary animation in the different groups.

[15] *HAMLET, L.C.; LAERTES, R.C.*

[16] *Rises. An ATTENDANT from table L. hastens across at back and kneels at the KING'S feet on the dais, holding two cups up to the KING, on a salver. As he kneels the cups are out of his vision. The KING raises one and makes as though he drops the pearl into it, his hand passing over the other cup before he drinks.*

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd ;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.]
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.¹

LAERTES. I am satisfied, [in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge : but in my terms of honour
I stand aloof ; and will no reconciliation,
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungored. But till that time,]
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.²

HAMLET. I embrace it freely ;
And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils. Come on.³

LAERTES. Come, one for me.⁴

HAMLET. I'll be your foil, Laertes : in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAERTES. You mock me, sir.

HAMLET. No, by this hand.

KING. Give them the foils, young Osric.⁵ Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager ?

HAMLET. Very well, my lord ;
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.
KING. I do not fear it ; I have seen you both :
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

LAERTES. This is too heavy, let me see another.⁶

HAMLET.⁷ This likes me well. These foils have all a length ?
[*They prepare to play.*⁸

OSRIC. Ay, my good lord.⁹

KING.¹⁰ Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.¹¹
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire ;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups ;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,¹²
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet.¹³ Come, begin :
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.¹⁴

HAMLET. Come on, sir.

LAERTES. Come, my lord.

HAMLET. One.¹⁵

LAERTES. No.

HAMLET. Judgement.

OSRIC. A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES. Well ; again.

KING. Stay ; give me drink.¹⁶ Hamlet, this pearl is thine ;

NOTE.—In presenting the foils the actor should rest the hilts on the left forearm in approaching from R. and the right forearm approaching from L.

Here's to thy health.

[Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.¹

Give him the cup.²

HAMLET. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.

Come. [They play.]³ Another hit; what say you?

LAERTES. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING. Our son shall win.

QUEEN.

[He's fat, and scant of breath.]

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:⁴

The queen carouses to thy fortune. Hamlet.⁵

HAMLET. Good madam!⁶

KING.

Gertrude, do not drink.⁷

QUEEN. I will, my lord:⁸ I pray you, pardon me.⁹

KING [aside]. It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.¹⁰

HAMLET. I dare not drink yet, madam;¹¹ by and by.¹²

[QUEEN. Come, let me wipe thy face.]

LAERTES. My lord, I'll hit him now.¹³

KING.

I do not think 't.

LAERTES [aside].¹⁴ And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

HAMLET. Come, for the third, Laertes:¹⁵ you but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afraid you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES. Say you so? come on.

[They play.¹⁶

OSRIC. Nothing, neither way.¹⁷

LAERTES. Have at you now!¹⁸

¹⁹ [LAERTES wounds HAMLET, then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.

KING.

Part them; they are incensed.

HAMLET. Nay, come, again.

[The QUEEN falls.²⁰

OSRIC.

Look to the queen there, ho!

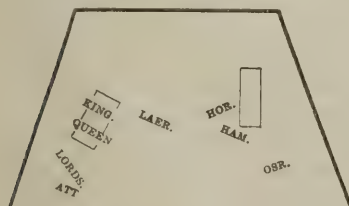
HORATIO. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?²¹

[11] HAMLET takes cup from the QUEEN.

[12] He goes to the L. and sets the cup on the R. corner of table down stage. The QUEEN returns to her seat; half way she puts her hand to her throat with uneasy gesture. She reaches her seat and sinks into it heavily.

[13] The KING, who has been narrowly watching the QUEEN, turns to LAERTES.

[14] Coming away from the throne a pace to R.C.



Positions at note 12.

[15] Advancing a little to C. down stage.

[16] In this bout they finish HAMLET C., LAERTES R.C.

[17] OSRIC has worked above and between them.

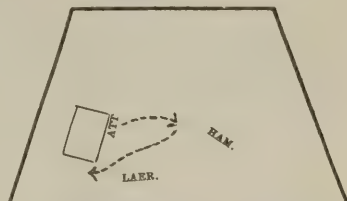
[18] LAERTES pressed HAMLET back to L.C.

[19] HAMLET presses his hand to his wound. LAERTES for a moment lowers his foil. HAMLET must register both pain and amazement, making exactly sufficient pause to do so. He then rushes in at LAERTES, drives him back to a little beyond C. to R., and with a twist of his foil disarms him. LAERTES' foil must fall down stage to his R. hand. HAMLET presses forward his sword arm with the foil point upwards, thrusting LAERTES back as he picks up LAERTES' foil with his left; at the same moment LAERTES has grasped HAMLET'S right wrist—and HAMLET, stepping back a pace, leaves his foil with LAERTES. HAMLET presses again to the attack, driving LAERTES up R.C. and round to L.C. where he wounds LAERTES. OSRIC works round to the back during this business and gets to front of the throne up R.C. The KING speaks "Part them, etc." as HAMLET is driving LAERTES round to L.C. HORATIO comes to HAMLET, who, after wounding LAERTES, backs to C.

[1] Roll of kettledrum, by DRUMMER on rostrum. TRUMPETERS sound a fanfare, and then the boom of cannon.

[2] ATTENDANT rises and carries the cup towards HAMLET, who stays him with a gesture, and he takes the cup to below the throne on the QUEEN'S R.

In this and a few subsequent diagrams the active characters only are indicated.



[3] At the end of the bout, LAERTES is up stage L.C. HAMLET C. below him. OSRIC, who has followed the passes, is now L.

[4] Holding forward her handkerchief.

[5] The QUEEN takes the cup from the salver held by ATTENDANT on her R.

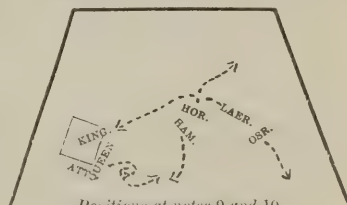
[6] HAMLET turns to speak to HORATIO, who has come to him at the end of the bout.

[7] Leaning forward as the QUEEN raises the cup and touching her left arm.

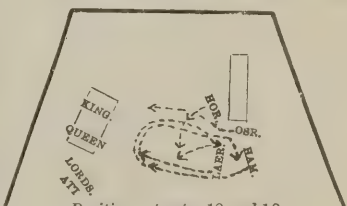
[8] The QUEEN frees herself from the KING'S touch by rising and stepping from the dais.

[9] Half turning to the KING, she then looks in HAMLET'S direction and drinks.

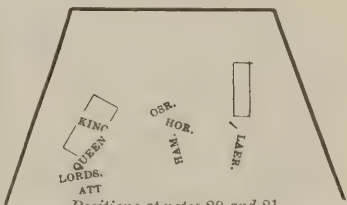
[10] The KING, who has leant forward, leans back in his seat. As the QUEEN comes to HAMLET with the cup he leaves HORATIO and turns to the QUEEN. LAERTES leaves OSRIC and crosses to the KING'S left hand.



Positions at notes 9 and 10.



Positions at notes 18 and 19.



Positions at notes 20 and 21.

[20] The QUEEN rises and staggers forward on the dais. The two LORDS and ATTENDANT below throne step to her.

[21] HAMLET leans on HORATIO. LAERTES drops his foil and staggers back. OSRIC passes to him quickly behind HORATIO. Several of the QUEEN'S LADIES come to her below throne.

OSRIC.¹ Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAMLET. O, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit :
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited.² The rest is silence.

[Dies.]

HORATIO. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince ;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!³
⁴ Why does the drum come hither ?

[March within.]

⁵ Enter FORTINBRAS, OFFICERS, the ENGLISH AMBASSADORS, and
SOLDIERS.

FORTINBRAS. Where is this sight ?⁶

HORATIO. ⁷ What is it ye would see ?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

[FORTINBRAS. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck ?

FIRST AMBASSADOR. The sight is dismal ;
And our affairs from England come too late :
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :
Where should we have our thanks ?

HORATIO. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you :
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placèd to the view ;]
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about : [so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads : all this can I
Truly deliver.]

FORTINBRAS. Let us haste to hear it,⁸
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.⁹

[HORATIO. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild ; lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

FORTINBRAS. Let four captains]

[1] Keeping at steps c.

[2] Sinks at full length as he speaks.

[3] Pause. Drums, etc.

[4] Rising, to L.C.

[5] OSRIC to R. of C. steps. FORTINBRAS and
his OFFICERS come C. of rostrum.
ENGLISH AMBASSADORS at the back.
All from L. SOLDIERS with torches
pass across rostrum and stand from R.
to L.

[6] Speaking from rostrum c.

[7] From L.C.

[8] Comes down steps to c. of stage.

[9] He turns to HORATIO L.C. The ENGLISH
AMBASSADORS come down and join
LORDS in front of throne.

[1] *Speaking to his SOLDIERS. Four of them descend steps to the body of HAMLET ; laying two spears on the ground, they place a shield upon them, place the body upon it.*

[2] *SOLDIERS raise the body of HAMLET, and slowly bear it towards C. steps. The AMBASSADOR and LORDS at the throne kneel. HORATIO stands with FORTINBRAS. Some of the COURTIERs and some of the LADIES also kneel.*

[3] *The curtain falls slowly as soon as the SOLDIERS carrying HAMLET'S body have reached the C. steps.*

¹ Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally : and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.

² Take up the bodies : [such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.]
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*[A dead march. After which a peal of ordnance is shot off.]*³

Curtain.

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